



**THE ABYSSINIAN ~~AT~~ AT HOME**



# THE ABYSSINIAN AT HOME

BY

C. H. WALKER, O.B.E.

(Late SUDAN CIVIL SERVICE, H.B.M. CONSUL  
for WESTERN ETHIOPIA)

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## PREFACE

The Abyssinian has been left to speak for himself. This book is a translation of Amharic notes, which are the statements of natives taken down in their actual speech and pieced together under the appropriate subject so as to read more harmoniously. It was felt that in this form they would create a more human document than an orthodox commentary on the customs and manners of this remarkable people. The natives questioned were in general illiterate provincials who told their tale in simple phrases, and it is significant that there is only one short chapter on Education, though of late years the Government and the Missions have established schools on modern lines in the larger towns. Few then of my informants could read or write, and it seemed to be more natural to allow them to describe their own country.

I was connected with Abyssinia for more than twenty years, and this task was originally undertaken in an effort to learn Amharic by conversation with natives. As the real life of the Abyssinian is a closed book to the stranger, the difficulty lay in the making of conversation, nor is it easy to persuade a native to discourse at length on any given subject and to exhaust it in detail. Point after point, however, was gradually dealt with, and the material grew. In most cases the talker was allowed to wander at will and to provide unconsciously a fresh base for inquiry. After the examination came the sifting and

checking of the information acquired, and finally the fitting together, so as to give the impression that the source is one.

Much material still remains, and in this book only a selection has been made of those subjects which throw the strongest light on the life and character of the people. No book to my knowledge has yet been published in which this task has been methodically attempted, although a lucid outline of native life is essential to those who have dealings with Abyssinian affairs. In the narrative there is little or no history to be found, since this can be studied in other works<sup>1</sup>; my own delight has been to show how the Abyssinian lives and moves and thinks. It is trusted that the style of the text will not be found too monotonous, and that any monotony will be outweighed by the novelty of the facts and sayings recorded.

It will be obvious that the information on certain subjects is incomplete, and here the details and additions can be filled in by students with opportunities for research or by residents who have the advantage of living in Abyssinia. The Law is a special difficulty that needs further study and analysis by one who has the leisure to trace the history of the stipulation and to follow the suitor from court to court. A Gi'iz scholar could also add much to our knowledge of the Church, which has only been discussed in so far as it influences the ordinary native; it will be noted that her influence is all-pervading.

The transliteration used is that adopted in my *English-Amharic Dictionary*,<sup>2</sup> though the "sh" and "ch" have been kept in common words such as sham mā, Dajjāch, Chiqā Shūm and Leibā Shāi. The Metro-

<sup>1</sup> E.g., *A History of Ethiopia*, by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, Kt., Methuen & Co., Ltd. Two vols.

<sup>2</sup> London: The Sheldon Press, Northumberland Avenue, W.C.2.

politan has been usually called "Abbātāchin" in preference to "Abbūna," as the former is more common. Both terms mean "Our Father." This "ch" is that in the word "church."

No great effort has been made to translate the word "tābót" which may mean according to the context :—

- (a) The Ark in the Sanctuary.
- (b) The Sanctuary.
- (c) The church.
- (d) The Saint to which the church is dedicated.
- (e) The sacred objects of mystery carried in procession.

Reference to verbal roots is made by giving the number of the verb<sup>1</sup> from the list at the end of my Dictionary, where it can be quickly found. As to the hours of the day, it must be remembered that the Abyssinian begins counting the hours at 6 a.m. and again at 6 p.m., so that the "third hour" may mean 9 a.m. or 9 p.m. Also his "day" begins at sunset, so that if a man says that he slept badly "to-day" night, he means "last" night. In mentioning the months the Abyssinian date is usually given, since it is convenient for residents. Incidentally, this book should be useful to those who wish to learn Amharic, into which the English can be easily rendered. Nearly all of the English words will be found in my Dictionary, though some omissions have been noted during the preparation of this work.

No useful purpose could have been served by a chapter on Slavery, since the Government is doing its utmost to stamp out this institution. Any passages which were likely to cause offence have been omitted, as the development of Ethiopia is now the earnest aim of the Emperor.

C. H. W.

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated as "vb."



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## TRANSLITERATION USED

### *Vowels and Diphthongs*

- a** short Continental *a* as in German "Mann" (not the *a* in Engl. "man") with tongue close to soft palate.
- ā** as *a* in "father," but often shorter.
- ai** as in "aisle."
- au** as in "Mauser."
- e** as *e* in "bet," but tongue raised in middle.
- ei** as in "eight."
- iei** = *ei* with *i* prefixed.
- i** Continental short *i* with tongue close to soft palate.
- l** as *ee* in "beet."
- o** =(1) *o* in "food" with tip of tongue well drawn back.
- =(2) *aw* in "fawn."
- ō** = *oa* in "boat."
- oi** = *oi* in "boil."
- u** = *u* in "full"; cf. the *oo* in "poor."
- ū** = *oo* in "fool." Being common, the long mark is often omitted.

### *Consonants*

- d** { are true dentals and not  
our true English alveolar  
sound, i.e. they are  
pron. with the tip of the  
tongue resting against  
the teeth and not against  
their sockets.
- t** {
- t** explosive *t*.
- b** is a true labial and not smothered.
- g** hard as in "go."
- h** a full-breathed *h*.
- j** as in "Jibouti," "jump."
- k** always hard; *c* is not used.
- q** guttural *k*; explosive with tongue bent up and back.
- š** = *sh* in "shirt."
- č** = *ch* in "church."
- č** its explosive form.
- ñ** *ng* in "rang," "king."
- ž** = French *je* or *ge* in "rouge."
- r** always trilled and not slurred as in English.
- p** explosive *p*.



## MONTHLY FESTIVALS

5th	Gabra Manfas Qiddūs.	23rd	George
7th	Sillásiei.	24th	Takla Hāimanot.
12th	Michael.	27th	Redeemer of the World.
16th	Kidāna Mihrat.	28th	Emmanuel.
19th	Gabriel.	29th	Egziavheir. }
21st	Mary.		Jesus. <sup>1</sup> }

Use of these as dates is often made in conversation.

*Coinage.* 1 dollar theoretically equals 16 tamuns.

In the West 8-10 was the usual rate.

The dollar may be worth 1s. 6d. to  
3s. 6d. according to the price of silver.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 111.

## CHAPTER I

### BIRTH

1. When a woman is in travail other women will go and salute her, saying, "Didst thou pass the night well? May Mary keep near thee!" Some will remain with her and pray, "Mary! Mary!" When the travail is finished, they will wish her well, saying, "May Mary restore thee with honour."

2. When a child is born, the women may raise the cry of joy five times for a boy, but for a girl thrice only. The glad father will fire his rifle, if such is found, and, drawing his sword, will stretch it across the door for a space, while the old women raise up the babe to wash it. Before an hour is passed one will have placed butter in its mouth, and the mother will lie tight swathed in a length of cloth, lest her back ail her. But Mary is hearkening, nor will she need much aid.

3. The porridge is made by the mother herself before the birth from flour, butter, salt, and red pepper. Also beforehand they will have prepared a pot of honey and butter, together with linseed and a fat sheep, if there is a rich relation. Or the kin will bring a dollar, or chopped meat and sauce, wrapped up in bread and carried in a basket. The linseed they will pound and mixing with the honey will boil upon the fire on perhaps the fifth day, when all may eat together and bless the mother after the washing of the body.

4. Food is given not only for the birth of children, but

also when a bitch doth bear they will say in reverence, "She is the babe of Mary!" and will buy bread in the market to feed her. So too at any time they will give food to a dog, crying, "For Mary's sake!" Therefore, even if the mother is very poor, there will be found some to tend her in honour of God and Mary.

5. Within a week the mother, carrying the babe and a knife, may leave the hut at dawn with her husband or some male relation—he in front with a bared sword. So, having sat and gazed upon the sun and shown it to the child, she will return. Nor before this was iron absent from her pillow, whether it be a chain or a sickle or a sword, for she knows that Satan flees from iron.

6. After a week the father may call his Confessor to sprinkle the hut after the washing.<sup>1</sup> So he will come, bearing the Holy Water in a bottle to asperse the house and all within. If the water suffices not, he will cry, "Bring water!" and will recite prayers over it, puffing and passing his Cross inside the cup—east and west and south and north. If any remains, he will not pour it upon the ground, but will add it to the leaven in the jar and to the ferment for the beer to exorcise the demons. Then he will bless the parents saying, "My children, may God rear up the babe for you and give you conscience and bring him to support you in old age and carry you to burial!"

### CIRCUMCISION

7. For a boy the circumcision will be on the seventh day, unless it is a Wednesday or a Friday or a day of fast; yet during the Lenten Fast, which is of fifty-five days, it is ordained that the ceremony need not wait. If the babe is a female, it should be on the fifth day, but

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 75.

many will wait twenty days or more till a female circumciser be found. But if the mother is diseased, the babe must wait one year or two years, lest the disease come forth and settle upon the body.

When a man or a woman of mature age is raised up to Christianity, there need be no circumcision, nor is there shame.

## CHAPTER II

### BAPTISM

1. A male child is raised up to Christianity on the fortieth day and a female child on the eightieth. Thus if the birth were on a Friday, a boy will be raised up on a Wednesday, for the Confessor will make the calculation for the parents. Yet if the mother is diseased they will delay, as with the circumcision, for the priests say that if the child of such a mother tastes the flesh and blood of the Eucharist, the disease will issue forth and slay it. So the parents will forbear, giving money to the poor in compensation or undergoing a short fast.

2. If a child dies before the fortieth or eightieth day, it will die unbaptised and will be buried outside the wall of the hut or outside the church ; for the Holy Ghost will not descend upon it before the appointed day, nor may the priest come to raise it up.

3. If a man of full age desires to be baptised, he must await the finding of a male child of forty days or a female child of eighty days. So also a woman of full age. Thus are many slaves of full years baptised, for the master will search out a god-father or god-mother, who will take them to the Confessor and display them. And the Confessor will order them to stay quiet at home, purifying themselves with washing, till a babe of forty or eighty days is found. Then will he recite prayers over the man or the woman for three days before the christening.

4. If the day of the baptism is Sunday, they will all go to the church before the birds twitter at dawn. But on a Wednesday or on a Friday or in time of fast it will be at the fifth hour.

5. There may be many awaiting baptism on that day, and all the parents with the god-parents will assemble in the enclosure of the church or in the Dajja Salām—the Door of Salutation—which is built at the entrance in the wall. Those of mature age who are to be christened will have had the head shaven. The father of the babe will carry a bottle or a pot filled with water, to which afterwards the priest will add the holy ṭabal.

6. First will come forth from the church the deacon and then the priest who when officiating are called gabbāri<sup>1</sup> sanāi. Both will wear a dark silk cloak and coloured shirt, and the deacon will hold a lighted taper. In the right hand of the priest will be the thurible with smoking incense, and in his left hand the Cross. After them will come the assistant deacon and priest, who are called nifqu, while on a Sunday or a day of festival there will be the scribes. Then those who are to be raised up—those of full age—will squat, and the mother will sit holding the child. Behind each stand the god-parent, and the officiating priest will stand in their midst.

7. Beforehand the mother will have twisted up at home threads of fine weft of cotton together with threads from the garment of Turkey red—to make for the baby's neck a slender cord which is named the mātab. Their number may be according to the will of the mother, nor need they be blue. And the assisting priest will hold up the Book of Christening and will read from it, having first placed inside it all the neck-cords of those to be raised

<sup>1</sup> vb. 614. Cf. p. 107.

up. The chief priest with his deacon will go round to shake the thurible over all, and then will receive from the assisting priest all the cords, which looped in half he will slip over the head of the Cross; then, holding the Cross over the vessel in which is the Holy Water, he will bless the cords, saying in the Ethiopic tongue, "One is the Holy Father, one is the Holy Son, one is the Holy Ghost!" and will dip all inside. For the church may have a basin for the Holy Water, and this may rest upon the ground or be set on three stones. After this he will go round to pour into the receptacle of each—whether a pot or gourd or can or bottle—a few drops of the *ṭabal*.<sup>1</sup>

8. For the sake of honour the forty-day child will be raised up first, since the Holy Ghost will descend upon him; and the women of full age will come last. If the babe is one of eighty days, the men will be raised up second and then the women.

9. First the deacon, taking the babe from the god-parent, will hold it under the armpits and bend it to the four quarters of the compass, causing it to make the *sigdat* or obeisance. As he turns the priest will say in Ethiopic, "Thy name be . . ." four times, while the revolving deacon will cry, "I cause thee to make obeisance for the Father, for the Son, for the Holy Ghost!" If the person is of full age and heavy, the deacon cannot raise him, but will take him under the armpits and cause him to revolve round the priest, who stands in the middle with Cross upraised. Afterwards the deacon will take the babe apart to a place that is clean, and either priest will asperse the child with Holy Water, saying, "Thy name be . . . I baptise thee for the Father, for the Son, for the Holy Ghost!" and, taking the babe from the deacon, will hold it and order the god-parent to swear

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 124.

that he (or she) will not be separated from the child. For the god-parent must clasp the right thumb of the babe and say, "Between this babe and the children<sup>1</sup> begotten by me I will not distinguish or may the three Trinities renounce me! May the word of your Reverence prevail!" Then at last will the priest give him the child, and tie the cord round the neck, again repeating the name. If this cord is broken in a few days it matters not, for the mother will knot another in its stead—either of silk or of cotton—nor need it be blessed.

10. For the aspersion, since all are crowded together in a small space, the men who are being raised up will squat naked, having removed their drawers and shirt, but will be curtained off by the god-fathers with shammas. So too will a woman be shrouded by her god-mother.

11. The name given by the priest is the Christian name, but the parents will already have given the child the "world" name. This Christian name is fixed by the name of the Saint day on which the baptism is held, and thus, if the day is the festival of George or Mary, the priest will say, "Let thy name be "Slave of George" or "Slave of Mary" or "Son of George" or "Son of Mary." For a girl he will say, "Daughter of . . ." For each day of the month has its Saint whose name the child must take. But perchance the father may cry, "My Father, my own name is 'Son of George,'" so the priest will change it to "Gift of George." Yet the parents hereafter will still use the world name and may call their girl "Thou art Gold" instead of "Daughter of Mary." Thus it was that the name of the Empress was Zăuditu ("the Crown"), but her Christian name was Askāla Māryām, by which name they prayed for her in the churches. And many are ignorant of this Christian name, for the great may be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 198.



known only by the world name. Thus Ras Tasammā<sup>1</sup> ("it was heard") was only known by this name, and Ras Táfari<sup>2</sup> ("he who is feared") was so called till he became the Nígús Haila Sillásiei ("Power of the Trinity"). A man and woman may have planned to leave a country, but of a sudden she may conceive and the birth will cause her to delay. So they will call a son Gázzaḥāñ<sup>3</sup> ("Thou didst exercise authority over me") and a girl they will name Tigzañ. Or a man may have no son till he ages, and then may call him Táddasa,<sup>4</sup> since his name has been "renewed," or Takwollā, as it has been "renovated" like the ornaments of a woman, which, when they grow dark, she brightens in a pot over the fire, having first stripped and pounded the leaves of the enkokko. These she boils in water, adding a little salt, and casts the ornaments within.

12. After the Baptism they will all go to the church that those raised up may receive the Eucharist, which is called the Qwurbān.<sup>5</sup> The god-father will have carried with him three cubits of clean muslin, in which he wraps the babe after making his oath and taking the child from the priest. Those of mature age will also don clean raiment, and all will go up to the church. But they will not all enter by the same door, for the males have their entrance at the north, and the women at the south. So a god-father with his babe will be separated from a god-mother with her babe—also the fathers and mothers will be parted.

13. When they have taken their stand, the assisting priest with the Meirōn or Chrism will anoint the forehead, cheeks, chin and breast of the baptised, saying, "Let

<sup>1</sup> vb. 141.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 781.

<sup>3</sup> vb. 659.

<sup>4</sup> vb. 391.

<sup>5</sup> vb. 261.

my name be . . .” For the naming is fourfold—at the revolving, at the aspersion, at the tying on of the neck cord, and at the anointing. Nor, if it is a babe, will the priest leave untouched the body and legs. This Chrism is thick and white, being scentless, and comes from abroad. It is stored in the house of the Sacristan and from time to time some is sent to the church, where after blessing by the priest it is kept on the Manbar or altar. Nor may a deacon touch it.

14. All this time the officiating priest was inside the Maqdas<sup>1</sup> which is the Holy of Holies, preparing for the Mass and for the Host. After the two priests and three deacons have taken their Eucharist and ended their work within the closed Maqdas they will come forth. The assisting deacon descending among the males will give to drink of the Holy Water to those who have been raised up and to those men that stand there. This he will pour into their hand, so that one whose palm is dirty will first spread his shamma over it; but for a babe the deacon will pour a drop into the mouth. If any ignorant man begins to wash his hands with the water, the deacon will reprove him and order him to drink out of his palm. Thence he will pass round to the women's side.

15. For the Eucharist the officiating priest will not go to those who are to receive it, but the deacon will take the babe from its god-parent and carry it to the priest who, dipping a small portion of the hibist (the consecrated bread) in the “Blood,” will place it in the child's mouth. A man of mature age also will be led by the deacon and ordered to swallow and hold his mouth with the shamma-covered hand. The Eucharist may not be given to any other save to those being raised up to

<sup>1</sup> vb. 207.

Christianity, unless perchance any of those present have been married by the Qwurbān marriage, and such are few.

16. Then the priests retiring into the Maqdas will go round to the other door that leads to the women's part; and the deacon will walk round from the side of the men to that of the women, passing through the outer Court or Qiddist with his small bell. In the part of the men is a curtain which the deacon may draw when the men receive the Communion, lest they be observed by the vulgar, but in the part of the women there is no curtain. Therefore the women who have not attained to the Eucharist will crouch with averted eyes or covered heads while the women communicants receive it. So the priest, having opened the door of the women, will stand while the deacon brings the female babe—if there is one—and afterwards a full woman. When all have partaken, the priest will close the door and return.

17. Lastly the priest, standing in the Qiddist, will raise all up to God by the Māsārrāgia<sup>1</sup> or Intercession, saying, "Yiqábaló Egziavheir."<sup>2</sup> And the people will reply "Amiein!" Then they will all repeat upright (if they know it) the "Abbūna za ba-samāyāt"—"Our Father which art in the Heavens." Afterwards the priest will make the Absolution or Nizāzei<sup>3</sup> crying, "You who have sinned in ignorance—may God absolve you!" and descending among them will say to each, "God absolve thee!" and they may depart. So the god-father will give the babe to the mother, who will carry it home slung on her back inside her shamma, unless she has a slave. But those of full age will walk warily, retaining their spittle and leaving their throats uncleared, in fear of the Eucharist.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 431.

<sup>2</sup> "God receive you!"

<sup>3</sup> vb. 375.

18. If a slave is headstrong or sickly, his master will not cause him to be baptised, nor if he desires to sell him. For after the baptism the slave will have a god-father, who will forbid the sale or, if the slave has disappeared, will accuse the master before the judge.

19. If a father forgets the day of baptism and allows it to pass unhonoured, his Confessor may fine him two dollars or punish him, saying, " Make a hundred prostrations and fast seven days ! "

## CHAPTER III

### EDUCATION

1. A poor father will say, "Not even for myself and for my boy have I money enough. How then can I enter him in the house of a teacher?" So he will leave the boy untaught, unless his god-father demand the lad and have him instructed.

2. The teacher may be a priest who is a Liq<sup>1</sup> or Professor who knows much learning. Some of the Liqāunt have a medicine which they give to the boys that they may remember well. Or he may be an ordinary priest or even a scribe, though the scribe they praise not overmuch, for he may work cunning and wander here and there round the town. But a priest will sit quiet with his fly-whisk while the lad who was first instructed teaches the last-comer. So the priest will sit as a judge and will punish the boy who errs, crying, "Was this what I told thee yesterday?" pulling and twisting his ear, till he pours forth tears. Thus he will learn perforce. In a big town there may be thirty boys who are under three teachers, but in a monastery town there may be as many as a hundred, and at Zeig Amal and at Addis Ababa one may find a thousand. But the children of officers will learn at home, for an officer will build a hut near by where the Confessor will teach them the alphabet, arithmetic, and the Psalter.

3. If the teacher is firm and vigorous, in six months he

<sup>1</sup> vb. 25.

will make him repeat his Psalter. This is written in the Gi'iz tongue with Amharic letters, nor will the boy understand what is written. It is written on the skin of the goat, which is very strong, and the price may be as much as seventeen dollars; but if a Christian buys one in his boyhood, it is not worn out even when he grows old. Those who write out the Psalter are the priests and scribes. In it are found the Psalms of David, which are divided into fifteen divisions—each called a "nigās"<sup>1</sup>—and each division is called by the first word. When the boy has read it, the teacher will send to the father, saying ("Give me the reward) of good news! Thy son has finished the reading," and the father will give him a cow or fifteen dollars, and to the boy a horse or a calf or a sheep. Also the boy will go round among his kin to tell them of the good news, and to beg a dollar or half a dollar or a sword.

4. If his father or mother dies, he will write his Christian name at the beginning and end of his Psalter, and whenever he finishes a reading, he will say, "Pardon for me the soul of my parent!" supplicating God.

5. When the pupils rise to go home, they bless their teacher, saying, "May God cause thy word to be heard and make thee to arrive at earth in Dabra Libānos and to be evergreen like the čibahā! May he broaden thee as the sycamore and cause thee to shine as the moon!" So the priest will bless them in turn and say, "Take care that ye come early to-morrow!"

<sup>1</sup> vb. 353.

## CHAPTER IV

### GUARDIANSHIP, ADOPTION, AND STEP-PARENTAGE

1. When a father departs to a far land he may ask another to guard his house and children as a deposit. So the guardian will be called the Ádarā Abbāt. If he is kindly he will tend them as his own ; but an evil one will turn his face from them, fearing not the gizzit <sup>1</sup> of the Confessor, for he was not bound by an oath.

2. A childless man will choose a boy from among his relations, and will rear him after making a testament <sup>2</sup> before witnesses, saying, " Lo ! I have willed all my goods to this boy. When I grow old, he will tend me, and when I die, he shall take all my possessions."

3. Or a lad without kin may say to himself, " There is none to be my guarantor or advocate or guard in folly." So, taking thought for the morrow, he will seek out a protector and will send to him three men as intercessors, who will go and beseech that man to grant his breast to the lad. If he is willing, the boy will buy a sheep for five dollars, and two dollars' worth of honey. Then both will *assemble elders and the man will call his Confessor.* When the tapers are lighted at sunset at the twelfth hour, the boy will enter with his elders and salute the master by adjustment of the shamma and by obeisance. And the master will ask " My children, why come ye ? " and the boy will answer, " The man is chosen for the office, the wood for the shrine. I have come that you may be

<sup>1</sup> vb. 660.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 198.

my father and make me your son." Then the man will command them to sit and will have brought in some milk to set near the honey of the boy. Into both the man will dip his right thumb and likewise the boy, while the others curtain them off with a shamma. The boy will place in his mouth the master's thumb, and the Confessor will cause the man to make the gizzit<sup>1</sup> and say, "I swear that this lad, to whom I have granted my breast, I will not distinguish from my own sons begotten by me. May the order of Your Reverence reach me!" So too the lad will make the gizzit<sup>1</sup> swearing, "Thou shalt be as my father who did beget me and thy wife shall be as my mother. When ye die, I will bury you, and in sickness I will tend you. Wheresoever thou dost send me will I go, nor will I refuse thy bidding with evil eye, looking upon thee askance as upon a stranger."

4. So that man will become the "Breast-father." Sometimes he will smear the milk and honey upon his breast and will place the nipple in the lad's mouth. One small cupful of honey is enough, and the rest is sent to the kitchen for making of mead. Likewise a kinless girl may seek out a breast-father and a breast-mother, beseeching them to grant their breasts. A man may not marry the daughter of his breast-father, for she has become his sister, just as he may not marry the daughter of his god-parent and as a girl may not marry the son of her god-mother or breast-mother.

5. The "Bread-father" is the step-father and there may be a bread-mother also. Nor may the son marry his step-sister. But a "Deposit-father" may allow a lad to marry his daughter, unless there is some relationship between them up to the sixth house; if the houses or grades be seven apart, it is meet.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 660.



## CHAPTER V

### THE CONFESSOR

1. When a young man marries a wife and builds a hut, they will need to have a Confessor, who is called the *ya-nafs abbāt*—the Soul-father. So he will go to the house of a priest and pray him to become his Confessor, and if he agrees, he will inquire the baptismal name of both and their dwelling place, so that he may visit them on an appointed day. Then he will come with the Holy Water and, calling for water in a cup, will recite prayers over it and bless it by passing his Cross round it to the four quarters of the compass. Afterwards he will asperse all within, and pour the rest of the water into the leaven jar and ferment for the beer.

2. Yearly a man will give to his Confessor a dollar or a kerchief or a horn-cup or a glass or a hide or a binder of muslin. A rich "soul-child" may give a mule or a black silk cloak or a *buluko*, which is a thick and heavy shamma. A fitting time for the gift is at the Fast of *Fīlsatā*<sup>1</sup>—the Assumption of the Madonna on August 23rd—when a Christian fasts for sixteen days. But one may give at Easter or at any time, according to his means. When Easter comes, the Confessor is given as his right the *qolo* of parched grain, and also at *Fīlsatā* he will receive *qolo* of parched barley or chick-pea from his children, who say, "My Father, seeing this forget me not! Guard me and call me by this name!" For the *qolo* is consumed during a fast.

3. One wishing to speak of repentance will go to the house of his Confessor or to the church where they will walk aside near the graves. So he will speak privily with him, saying, "O my Father, absolve me against this evil sin!" If he has eaten meat in time of fast or stolen money, the Confessor may say, "My son, for this evil thing that thou hast done give me money, which I will divide among the poor. And do thou fast fifteen days! God absolve thee!" Or, if the sin be more grievous, he may give him a hundred prostrations and cause him to fast two forties. When the days of fast are ended, that sinner will return having changed five of seven dollars into tamuns, which they will divide among the poor of the church, though the Confessor may keep back a few for himself. Then the Confessor will dismiss him, after making over him the Pater Noster, and will grant him the Absolution by reciting prayers over him and sprinkling the Holy Water upon his head and causing him to kiss the Cross.

4. Yet, if he have killed another, no priest between the Sea and the Western March may grant the Absolution. Only he will say, "Go to Abbūn at Addis Ababa and inquire!"

5. When a man is about to die or is departing on an expedition he will declare his final wishes, after calling together his Confessor and elders, for without the priest the nizāzei<sup>1</sup> will not stand.<sup>2</sup> If the words of the testament are written down, the paper will abide with the Confessor, who on the fortieth day of Remembrance after death will read it aloud. Or he will guard the writing till the man returns from war.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ch. XXX.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NECK - CORD

1. Every Christian must have a neck-cord of two threads tied round his neck, or he will seem an Islām, and men will say to him, "Ara! What is it? Why dost thou eat grain thus? Thy neck 's Islām!" For the cord is the Witness<sup>1</sup> and may have snapped unnoted. So, when they cry out in wonder, he will tie thread round his neck, or fibre or a coloured ribbon, nor will he eat with empty neck.

2. It matters not if the cord have nothing suspended from it, but on the babe's at baptism may be hung a tiny cross or ring of silver or of gold. Till the babe is five or six years old, and learns to know his soul and evil from good, they suspend from the neck also a thin piece of leather with dark blue beads strung upon it. They may add too a tiny<sup>2</sup> bell. Afterwards, when he can walk safely here and there, the father buys in the market a neck-cord of dark blue silk which the traders have twisted ready, or else he may twist one himself, buying some loose silk—three tamuns weight in the scales. In Jimma and Addis Ababa, where beads are cheap, sixty or seventy of the dark blue beads are bought for a bar of salt or for five tamuns, but in the west they may cost seven tamuns. If the father has money, he may mingle white beads of clear glass, alternating them with the dark blue, so that the boy may be resplendent.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* "Tāzzābi."

3. The beads of the priests and of those who pray may be of red glass or of dark wood or of white wood, but the dark wood has the greater honour. Looking towards the sun a man will pull forth his string of beads, and will recite his prayers at the due time.

4. To one wearing the short neck-cord, the demon will not approach nearer than forty paces. For it is the chief of the two neck-cords, being the Witness, which, when men work ill or bear false witness or lie or reel in drink, will condemn them. In a suit at law, when a man counts his witnesses, he will say to each, "Have knowledge for me! I trust thy neck-cord. If thou speakest for another, perish! If for God, prosper!" So will the witness bring forth the truth, nor will he lie to favour even his kin. For even a debtor may bear false witness, and afterwards repenting, will say, "Ai! It is the truth! I will not swear! I will pay! My soul is more valuable than my money!"

5. But there is also a long neck-cord.<sup>1</sup> This is made from four pieces of dark blue silk which are doubled and hooked over a piece of wood. Then a man twists up the threads passing left over right and right over left, while another pushes the twist in the middle with the iron roller of the cotton-worker in order to tighten it.

6. This long neck-cord is put on by a youth when he reaches puberty and by a girl on the day of her marriage. That of the man is slipped over the neck and will touch his navel, and may lie inside his shirt or may hang down outside, swinging loosely as he bends. After two years, maybe, he will buy fresh silk, if the old be worn. That of a woman touches her knees, and when she has put on her shirt, she slips the cord over her neck and then binds her girdle over and round it.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 112

7. This long cord may not be worn by a priest, but a scribe will recite words over it. On it are slung talismans enclosed in leather and the seal, and maybe a ring and a prickler of iron to extract wax from the ear or a thorn from the flesh. Also there may be a charm against snake bite, which is a ring made from the horn of the kudu. For a hunter in the desert once saw a kudu eating a snake, and knew that a potent medicine was to hand. Or the horn charm may be in the shape of a small cross.

8. There is a class of men named būdā, whose eye is evil. When a man is eating of a meat sauce at the mid-day meal, a būdā passing the door may gaze upon him. So he will fall ill and will send speedily to the scribe who sells medicines and written charms. These his friends will sew for him inside some foreign leather and place the packet upon his long neck-cord, and he will be healed. For some scribes are cunning workers of spells, having parchment of the skin of the goat on which they can inscribe holy texts and charms against the evil eye and shooting pains and rheumatism and blindness. Also a scribe may sell a medicine from the root of a tree, and, if a man lie sick from the evil eye, his bread companions will cast the drug upon the embers and, when the fumes arise, will cover the sick man with a shamma and hold him over the fire, till the smoke enters his mouth and he begins to rave, saying, "So-and-so looked on me as I ate." Thus will be revealed to them the name of the būdā. Then, hiding their knowledge, they will give a feast to which in ignorance the būdā will come and, when all are assembled, one of the kin will cry, "Come, all of you! Spit upon the sick man before our eyes!" So all will go tuf-tuf, and when the spittie of the būdā touches him, he will be healed. But, had he worn a writing

upon his neck-cord, he would not have been struck down.

9. Those who delight in much writing—such as an officer or a lady of high degree—will keep with care upon the long cord the Scroll of Righteousness, which is called the Lifāfā Ṭsidiq.<sup>1</sup> This is rolled up in a leather case, and on it is written the name of the owner and of his parents. Other matters too are inscribed thereon, and on a Sunday a man drawing it forth from its cover will recite it, if he can read, or will give it to his Confessor to read aloud. And at the New Year on the Eve of St. John,<sup>2</sup> before the lights are fired, each taking out the scroll will wrap it in a rag and bury it in the ground; but on the morrow digging it up he will string it again on his cord. This they do since a year has passed and another has entered in, and they wish that the fortune of the scroll may be renewed even as the changing year.

10. If one man lends silver to another, the debtor may place his thumb mark upon the scroll in acknowledgment of the debt, or he will seal it if he has a seal. Also for buried silver there may be a guide upon the writing. For a man going a far journey may give his money in deposit and write upon the scroll the names of the witnesses and of the bondsman. Yet, if he trusts the debtor, he will give the money before the Confessor or a godly friend without witnesses. If he buries his dollars, he will place them in a potsherd and will bury them and go, gazing swiftly round lest another has spied upon him. So, if he falls ill and dies in a distant land, another will unstitch the case and having the writing read will send it to the kin, who will seek out the debtor and compel him to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Bandlet of Righteousness* (Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, Kt.), Luzac and Co.; vb. 756., cf. IX, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 88.

pay, or, noting the marks of the place of burial, will go and dig up the potsherd.

11. Hailu Málakot,<sup>1</sup> the father of Menilik, loved his son, and when the time of death drew near, he caused to be written a paper of declaration telling of all the money that he had. Fearing lest his boy in his ignorance might not gather together all the wealth, or lest the kin should seek to take the money, he made a list of all—not omitting one broken needle—and had the writing sewn up in a leather case. And this was strung upon the long neck-cord of Menilik. But, before the boy had grown to manhood and knowledge, there came an enemy, the Emperor Theodore, who seized him and asked where was his father's money. And Menilik replied, "My father gave me nothing and told me nothing—only this which I carry round my neck." Then Theodore broke the stitches and found where the money was buried.

12. When a man dies, this scroll is stretched out over the body after the laying out, being tied with thread around the forehead and the big toe, and it is buried with him.

<sup>1</sup> "Power of the Divinity."

## CHAPTER VII

### MARRIAGE

1. The son of an officer may have spied the daughter of another on her way to church, and will inquire as to her gait and accomplishments. If these are fair, he will tell his father, who may say, "My son, this girl is the daughter of a master; if thou wishest, marry her! I myself will collect my bread companions and peers, and will go to her father." Then the son will rise and kiss his father's shamma; and with five or six friends, maybe, the father will set forth. Having arrived they will adjust their togas and remain silent, till the father of that girl asks them, "What is it, my brethren? Why came ye to-day?" And they will answer, "We came to beg a certain thing; if permission be given us, we will speak to thee of it." So he will reply, "Why should I refuse you?" Then one of them, knowing in speech, a master of cunning, will speak with the father in proverbs, and cause him to laugh in wonder, till as one still ignorant of their wish he will seat himself saying, "What is this matter? Be seated and tell me of your need." And making due obeisance they will sit down, and the elders will speak one of one matter and one of another, saying, "Thus it is, my brother, that we came seeking thy kinship. Give now, we pray, thy daughter to the son of Ato Ekalei,<sup>1</sup> who brought us here." Then either he will refuse or will cry, "Ishi!<sup>2</sup> Of a surety! I will take counsel

<sup>1</sup> "So-and-so."

<sup>2</sup> "Very well!" cf. vb. 168.



with my heart and kin and, if God give you, I will give you."

2. That day week the intercessors returning will ask the father, saying, "What counsel did thy heart and thy kin give thee, my master?" And he may answer, "I and she will not be wanting from the marriage, nor shall thy son be wanting. She sitting here in the house carries not shield or rifle for me. And now this is it! I have given her! Take her!" Then rising they will kiss his knee and depart.

3. If he desires to refuse, he may say, "It may not be. My daughter is still a girl," or "Another preceded you and persuaded me, and I have received the neck-cord and signature." Yet if a father is refused one day, he may send a priest or monk or officer, who may bear a stone or billet of wood upon his shoulder. But the lad's father will not return himself.

4. After another week her affianced will come with his two Mizeis and with friends, for the Mizeis<sup>1</sup> is the bridesman. One of them is the chief Mizei and him the husband will have chosen, saying in his heart, "Ékalei is the son of a peer; if we are distressed, he will be our surety." So he will send friends as intercessors and beg that man to be his Mizei, asking him in all honour "by fire and water." And, if he is willing, the chief Mizei will ask another to be the gilga<sup>2</sup> Mizei to aid him in his work; but it is the chief Mizei who carries out the bride upon his back. If her husband dies, no woman may marry her Mizei, for he is counted as her brother, nor may a woman's child marry the child of her Mizei. Nor, if a woman marries again,

<sup>1</sup> They say that this word Mizei means "my brother," like the word Minjei of the Gallas and Arkei in Tigrei, while in the Wolâmo country the woman will call him Ta-ishau and he will address her as Ta-michei.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 629.

can she have another Mizei, for there is no honour in the second marriage.

5. So the affianced will come to place around the neck of the girl the cord, and to bind the agreement and make the solemn stipulations; nor will the man's father be absent. The man on his side will have a Nagar Abbāt to speak on his behalf and she also will have chosen one. Then all will stand after adjusting their shammas, but the spokesman of the girl will sit drawing proudly his shamma over his nostrils and asking, "What money have ye?" And the agent of the man will reply, "So many dollars, slaves, cattle, and mules." Her Nagar Abbāt will ask, "How will you maintain our child?" and his agent will say, "Henceforth whatever we obtain, she by her spindle, I by my shield—whatever silver fortune may bring to her and to me I will not conceal from her. May Menilik die (if I lie)!" For beforehand they will have appointed a judge and trusty witnesses and his Nagar Abbāt will make the asseveration before them. And so too her spokesman will stipulate, "My daughter have I given to my son. May Menilik die!" Which is the 80 bond by law. The neck-cord has strung upon it a cross and a silver ring, and is passed round her neck by the chief Mizei.

6. In Manz, Gishei, Tágulat, Bulgā, Yifāt, Yifrātā, Gidim, and Marabeitei—which are Shoa proper—the offer of a marriage gift by the man is a shame, for this is a new custom brought by traders making her like a common woman. There, if the man set out a hundred dolars, she will count out fifty—which is the *siso*<sup>1</sup>—whether in money, grain, or kine. If she is the daughter of a big man, she will count out the equal, and the two sums together will be the partnership money. And if the

<sup>1</sup> Lit. ½, cf. pp. 124, 194.

father takes a gift, others may revile him, saying, "So-and-so ate a fine."

7. If the bride is the daughter of a rich man her price may be 1,000 or 2,000 dollars, which the bridegroom will bring with him on the day of the sarg or wedding which is the day of the swearing of the Mizeis. Also will he bring presents, escorted by his guests. These may be the ornaments of a woman—an embroidered shirt and drawers, anklets and bracelets, a gold necklace, a cross and a ring of gold, a hair-pin, a waist-girth of muslin, a barnós, a cloak of black silk, a black silk umbrella, and a hat, together with a fine shamma which is called a kutā. Nor if the father is rich does the bridegroom return with empty hand. For the girl's father may give him a shield ornamented with silver washed in gold, two spears, a bull, a horse with a slave to groom and lead it complete with trappings, a mule with embroidered saddlery with a cloth to cover both, a shirt for himself, and the full dress of ceremony (the šillimā<sup>1</sup>) with curved sword and revolver and filled cartridge-belt and a fine rifle. But, if the girl's father is poor, he cannot give all these and can but give him a pair of drawers with a shirt and fine toga, and length of cloth for the girdle. Or, if poorer than this, he will dismiss him in silence with empty hands.

8. If the father is generous, he will say to his daughter, "Money I have in abundance. What use is thy marriage gift to me? Let my daughter keep it!" But some fathers will keep all the silver or will give her half only.

9. The price of a soldier's daughter, if she is a maiden, may be fifteen or twenty-five dollars, apart from the feast which the husband will prepare. For the young couple feast twice—once in her father's house and again in that

<sup>1</sup> vb. 180.

of the husband. The neck-cord and ring which the Mizei passes round her neck will cost one and a half dollars, and, when the bridegroom goes to fetch her, he will bear presents—the long drawers that cost seven dollars, a gown worth six dollars, a girdle one dollar, a fine toga five dollars, a necklace three dollars, and the ear-rings one dollar. Her father, being poor, will have spent three dollars on a sheep, one dollar on red pepper and salt, one dollar on butter, one dollar on the *ašāro* (which is grain roasted and coarsely pounded for beer—whether barley or maize or *dura*), and one dollar on *geišo* and condiments—maybe fifteen dollars in all.

10. When a man marries and calls a companion saying, "Come, I pray thee, to the sarg!" he may not refuse. For he will fear saying, "If I go not, he will be angry with me, and if I die (*lakā!*)<sup>1</sup> he will not bury me." And her father will have written letters to all his friends saying, "To-day week I am giving my daughter in marriage. Fail me not, my master, for she is child to us twain, nor am I alone her father." Or, if the kin lives far off, he may write long before. So all the wedding guests of the father of the maid will arrive towards the seventh hour of Sunday, which is one hour after noon, bringing with them one ten dollars, another five dollars, or even one dollar, or a sheep or thirty pieces of bread or two jars of beer—each according to his power.

11. The father of the maid will have set up tents and made booths of grass and spread rugs and will cause the gentle folk and elders to sit left and right of the door of the tent. Towards evening he will cause lights to be illumined and, when the affianced arrives with his company of guests, he will inquire of them as one surpris-

<sup>1</sup> "Alack!"

"Why stand ye there, my children?" Then all the attendants of the bridegroom will gird their togas and will hearken to the spokesman of the man as he answers, "We came to be your children that you may be our father. Our witnesses are So-and-so. Produce four for us!" So after four witnesses have been set forth by each and the ninth man<sup>1</sup> (the headman of the district) has been named as judge, the Nagar Abbât of the daughter asks them, "What have ye in your hands?" And the spokesman of the man will reply, "A mass of gold, a roll of shammas." Then the other cries, "Bring here your mass and roll," and the Nagar Abbât of the man will count out the dollars exact, together with the ornaments and clothes for the girl. Thus the others receive the silver and presents and all enter the house, sending the mules to the village or dividing them among the neighbours for the night. Afterwards they spend the night eating and drinking of the feast that has been prepared, but the bridegroom sits remote and unseen between his two Mizeis, passing the night in quiet. For this night is that of Sunday on which alone it is the custom that a man should go to fetch his maid.

12. All arise at dawn, and the guests will leave the house. But the two Mizeis, singing, "Hai lôga shibó!" will go towards the place where they have seen the bride sitting with three or four of her hand-maids dressed all alike. And the father and elders may repulse them saying, "Return! We will give her to you!" Then the Mizeis cry "Bring her!" and the father calls out, "Come!" and they going may search and laughing may select the wrong maiden. When she is found and brought to light, first the oath must be taken and the bride and groom with the bridesmen will sit together—he on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 42.

right, and she on the left—and will taste of two horn cups of milk and honey. Then the Confessor of the girl's father will cause the Mizeis to make the religious oath in front of the father and mother, for the Mizeis must swear that he will become her brother. And the Confessor will say to each Mizeis, "Come, swear that thou wilt not distinguish her, our daughter, from thy own sister!" and asking him the name of his Confessor, will say, "Swear that the word of thy Confessor shall reach thee!" So he will swear before the Confessor, saying, "I have received my sister! If she send for me by day, by day will I come; if by night, by night will I come. For whatever matter thou dost send for me, I will arrive and tell thy father and kin. May his word reach me!" and will kiss the Cross and will call upon the name of his new sister in the hearing of all, saying, "From my sister will I not distinguish thee." And she will call him "brother" and "my shield" and not by his own name. So, too, will the second bridesman swear and they two will become the brother-in-law of the bridegroom and her kin will become related by marriage to the Mizeis. At the last the priest will recite prayers over them and bless them, saying, "God make you sufficient for begetting, for conception, for office, for honour, for the Communion and for the Flesh of the Lord! God guide you to truth and make you kin with Abraham and Sarah! World without end! A male child for a horse; a girl for a barnós! God grant you!"

13. When the animals have been girthed and saddled, the bridegroom with the men goes forth and stands outside the door. But two or maybe four other women, named dangatûrs, have been clothed to resemble the bride, who will be waiting in a corner of the house with her mother and sisters. And from the women the

bridesmen will select two—the bride and a dangaṭūr—and carry them out on their backs, the arms of the women around their necks. So they will set the two on mules and will lead the mule of the bride in front, the chief Mizei to the right supporting her, and the gilgal Mizei to the left holding an umbrella over her head. But the husband will follow behind. And this attendant goes with her to guard her and give her counsel as one ignorant, and maybe the other attendants will follow too. After some days, when the girl has grown accustomed to her new home, they will send back the attendant, giving her three dollars maybe and a gown and a fine robe.

14. The day before the wedding a wheaten loaf is baked thus in the girl's house. Over the bottom of the iron griddle leaves are laid thick, and the dough above them, and then more leaves over the dough. Above all a second griddle is inverted smeared round with the dung of the cow. Then they light fire between the three stones set in a triangle and place burning brands also on the iron plate till the bread is baked. Afterwards, stripping the leaves from the bread, they choose from among their bread baskets one with a cover, in which the bread is laid, and the basket is placed aside covered with a cloth of red with grey shirting underneath. When the bride goes to her husband's house, at least one basket of bread will be carried in front, measuring across one cubit and three fingers in thickness, like the bread of the Mahabbar.<sup>1</sup> This will be escorted by her friends, but her parents and Confessor will remain behind. This bread is for the giving to her of a new name in the house of the husband, but there may be a second basket of bread carried for the guests who, after going a short way, will stay to devour it; and this basket is sent back at once.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. XVI.

15. When they arrive at the husband's house, the chief Mizei will take her as before upon his back and remain standing. Then the mother of the man will produce for the bride some new name and proclaim it saying, "We have named her So-and-so! Set her down and enter!" So the mother will take the bread and break it in pieces for all to share. Thus a woman may have three names—the first given by her parents at the birth, the second given by the priest at baptism, and the third given by her mother-in-law at her marriage. And her new neighbours and relations will call her by the third name, while her kin will still speak of her by the world name, for save her parents few will know her Christian name. If a guest appears who is ignorant of her name, they will tell him this third name, and by this will he call her. If the mother of the husband is dead, they will invite his aunt or some old lady to name the bride.

16. The utensils of the house are bought by the husband, but a bride will take with her a hide, the basket, a knife, a kerchief, and a decanter. If her father is a great man she may go forth with many possessions, but these five at least are customary. Therefore a poor man, fearing lest his name perish, will borrow them if they are lacking; so his daughter will not go with empty hands. If she is divorced, she will take for herself the decanter, and, if she is evil, may cut the hide in half for her share—like-wise his shamma and drawers. However, some men say that the knife, decanter, and kerchief are not needful. But the hide was spread on the Sunday night as a seat for the bridal pair and for the Mizeis, and when the time of dinner drew near, the father chose a fair decanter for the bridegroom to drink from and a Mizei, receiving it and filling it to the brim with beer or hydromel, tasted the



drink before covering it with the kerchief and setting it before the bridegroom. So he drank, and after a little time the servants brought them fat uncooked meat together with a chosen knife, which the Mizeis received and examined and cut with it flesh from the haunch which a servant held up before them. This they set before the bridegroom, and when all were filled, the servants removed the knife. And with idle talk they passed the night. But at cock-crow fresh food was brought to them, and the knife a second time. But it did not return, for the Mizeis took it with the hide and decanter and kerchief, and giving them to a slave caused them to be sent to the husband's house. In Shoa also a great man will send five or six pack-mules laden with šuro, which is a mess of lentils and peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices together with beans, or a smaller man will send a quart of šuro ground with condiments, and of pepper ground with salt and spices—packed inside a pot. For, if these are not sent, a friend may revile the bride saying, "Thou luckless wench, who hadst no pot of šuro!"

17. In Shoa they say that the slayer, the dead, and the bridegroom are one. For he who has slain an elephant or a buffalo will enter into his home escorted by all with honour and rejoicing. So too on the day of death, one who had money and kin will cause them to mourn and gather together. Also the bridegroom will be attended by a crowd and by minstrels with drums and flutes and trumpets—as though he were a shrine.

18. The husband will hire or cause to be built a honeymoon house in which they two may reside apart for a few days, nor will the bridemen and attendant be far away. And they will keep themselves apart while the kin and guests of his father eat of a feast. On the morrow the

Mizeis may return with a drum to her father's house, accompanied by friends to beg presents for the good news. Also they will go round the houses singing and begging, and one may give them a dollar or an alād, which is the half dollar, or a ring or a fine robe, or a calf or a goat. Thus even a soldier may collect forty or fifty dollars, which the bridemen will bring to him to be divided between husband and wife. If they are rich, they may remain in the hut for two weeks. After a month, if the father of the bride is able, he will make the millāš<sup>1</sup> or return feast, inviting the wedded pair, who will take with them a sheep, a basket of bread, and a jar of hydromel. And afterwards they will sing, "Chágwilash ábbibwāl<sup>2</sup> zārei—chágwilash ábbibwāl zārei—Thy wedding hut has flowered to-day," while others sing in answer, "Íhitei, shānkworei, chágwilash ábbibwāl zarei—My sister, my sugar-cane!" or "Thou dost bind on a golden bracelet, thou dost break a golden bracelet! my sister, my child!"

19. If a man married on Saturday he would be reviled, for a maiden wife has honour, and may not know her husband first on Sunday. Therefore he will take her away from her father's house on Monday morning lest they say, "Ékalei<sup>3</sup> is like a tanner. Why was the wedding on Saturday?" Nor may a husband know his wife on Sunday, nor if he know her on Saturday may she attend Church on the morrow, nor may she go to the Church while unclean. Thus a Christian man honouring the Sabbath will leave his bed on the night of Saturday, and will lie chastely upon the floor, and at cock-crow kindle the fire, praying to God and to the Sabbath. And if he is lettered, he may recite prayers and drawing out his rosary may count his beads. So, also, during the Fast of the

<sup>1</sup> vb. 48.<sup>2</sup> vb. 377.<sup>3</sup> "So-and-so."

Assumption will he remain pure, and eat only of unground grain, touching not the grinding stones. At least such were Christian usage, but the flesh of many is weak.

20. In the cemetery the husband is buried to the right and the wife to the left, for men and women may not be buried together.

21. A maiden is given in marriage by her father's will, for if she were to say, "I will not marry this man and do not love him," it would be a disgrace; therefore she will consent. If her father is dead, one of the kin of her parents will be her guardian, and will give her in marriage. If she refused she would be cursed, and she will fear the curse. And also, if she married without permission, they would curse her, saying, "Be accursed! May thy hut not prosper thee, and may thy offspring be unblessed!"

22. Among the Amāras a maiden that does not marry is rarely found, for she fears to remain unmarried in her father's house lest others laugh at her—a girl lacking a house. If no man comes to woo her, she will be sorrowful, and will find her own way. For perhaps some man who fears the dowry and the cost of the feast will beguile her secretly either by speech or will send an old woman to persuade her as she draws water. For such a man may say, "I will take her and send afterwards an intercessor to her parents so as to be reconciled with them." Thus at the appointed hour and place she will meet his Mizeis, who will carry her off like raiders. And lest men assert that she went knowingly, she will scream in pretence, and afterwards the man will make her his bond wife before a judge and witnesses. Or her father may be a step-father who may dislike the girl and neglect her. Therefore, when the neighbours tell him that the two have been together, he may laugh, saying, "What does it irk me?

Her dowry is small and the cost of the feast will be great. Beyond toil what gain is there? Let him take her secretly and I will be silent and blind."

23. But a man may say to himself, "Before this I married a maiden and divorced her. Now I will marry a woman—a seït—one married before. For I have little money for her marriage gift and the feast." The truth is that a seït has not the same honour as a maiden, and a gift of ten or fifteen dollars may suffice for her father, nor need a man take thought for many ornaments or clothes, and if her father is rich he may even refuse to accept a present. For when a wife that was a maiden is divorced she returns to her father's house, where she sits till another comes to ask for her. But when she goes forth again no cord is hung around her neck, nor is she carried forth on the back of the Mizeï, nor is the bread baked for her, nor is there the granting of a new name by the mother-in-law. But the man will assemble a judge and four witnesses, two for her and two for him, and her agent, rising up, will say, "Here ye be! I have given my daughter — to my son —. Menilik yimût<sup>1</sup>!" And the Nagar Abbât of the man will reply, "I have received — for my son. Menilik yimût! Whatsoever thou by thy fortune and I by my fortune obtain—thou by thy spindle and I by my shield—this will we divide." Then her spokesman will cry, "Call a surety for her eye and teeth and hand!" and will receive two sureties before releasing the other agent. Or the husband may stipulate before the judge, saying, "Before this time the money acquired separately by me was so much. This is my own silver. Yet if thou dost bear me a child, there shall be no separate monies. I will make thee my half wife. But if

<sup>1</sup> vb. 84.

thou art barren, all this silver shall remain my own save the interest and only what comes to us after the marriage will we share."

24. After they have made the 80 bond and the stipulation, the man will arrange to fetch her on a certain day, which may be Sunday or any day, nor need she spend the night previous in the house of her father, since she is not being married in her virginity and has no honour. Nor needs she a handmaid nor Mizeis, unless she is noble, for she is not afraid. Nor is there an oath before a priest. Yet her Nagar Abbāt and Mizei may be the same man, who will say, "I am he who will be as thy brother and save thee in trouble." And she also will say before witnesses, "Thou and I are brethren and thou wilt save me from trouble."

25. Within the realm of Ethiopia few men marry their wives by the Eucharist, which is called the Qwurbān<sup>1</sup>, marriage, and one may live long in the land before finding two who are so joined together. And the honour of such is great. Before a deacon becomes a priest he must marry, but he will not take the Eucharist with his wife before the fortieth day, when the Aklil or Crown is set upon their heads. If the Marriage Service is read over them and they take the Communion together, they are each called qworābi, and may taste of the Eucharist like small children at baptism; but after baptism the priests will not give the Eucharist to other men and women who have not been married by the Qwurbān. For they are not held to be pure. If they have taken the Communion together and have become qworābi, there is none who can loose the bond save death; therefore few will take the Communion with a woman and live in one religion, since

<sup>1</sup> vb. 261.

most have not conquered their flesh, but injure their soul, keeping their guardian spirit far from them. So they fear the Qwurbān. Yet one or two, trusting each other, will agree to have the Matsāfa Taklīl read over them, and will speak with the Confessor, after they have observed in secret the character of the other and known their own soul and made firm their mind.

26. If the wife dies, the husband will become a monk, and if the man dies, she will enter a convent, becoming a nun, or, if there is no convent, she will minister to a shrine. Yet if the widow finds a man who was married by the Qwurbān, and whose wife is dead, she may marry him by the Crown. But such are rarely found.

27. Those who have tasted the Communion together under one shamma may destroy their Qwurbān by evil living, but such are the enemies of God and men will despise them. He who becomes a monk is known by his qōb, which is a white cap sown up from shirting or from the piece of a toga—triple sewn backwards and forwards in strips. This also will wear a nun who is the widow of a qworābi, and she will honour her qōb as her religion, saying, "This cap is my husband," and will stand firm with it, if she have conscience.

28. If a bond wife is barren and if the two love each other she may say, "So it is Mary who diminished me! I have given thee permission that our house be not destroyed! Search out and make agreement with a waṭ-beit—a servant girl—to whom perchance Mary will permit fruit." And he, hiring a garad, will wait a year or two and, if fruit is still lacking, the husband and wife may agree together, saying, "Therefore it is God who prevented us! Let us take the Communion together!" and speaking with the Confessor they will go to the church

and be crowned with the Aklil. But an evil man will divorce her for her barrenness and will marry again, changing his wife many times and living ever childless, for without the will of God it may not be, and the women of the towns bear not easily. Also will he remain empty handed, ever dividing his money with his last wife.

29. When a husband and wife think in their hearts to take the Qwurbān together they will speak with the Confessor, who will say to them, "Nay, wait! Search in your soul morning and night and see if it be possible!" So they may wait more than a year, and monthly<sup>1</sup> when he comes to taste the Bread and Wine he will ask them, "Are ye able?" and, if they answer "Au!" he will arrange for them. So one Saturday night they will wash their bodies—having remained chaste for one week—and on the morrow early will don clean clothes. Then, with their kin and bread companions, they will go to the Dajja Salām and strip off their clothes, while others curtain them off, and will crouch naked together, he laying aside his shirt and she her gown, while the Confessor baptises them with the Holy Water. For the water they will have brought with them in a pot which the priest will bless, blowing over it and passing his Cross to the four quarters round it and dropping in drops of the Holy Water of the Mass from his bottle. Afterwards they will dress, and the priest will take them to the church—she entering by the women's entrance and he by the men's—and they will meet in the Qiddist. There, after the Mass, the priest causes them to taste of the Flesh and Blood as they stand under the same toga, which the husband will hold over her, standing at her right. But they need not wear the Crown which is called the Aklil, for this only a deacon must wear when he makes the Qwurbān with his wife. This

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 130.

is the Crown which the deacon turns over upon his head when the shrine goes forth on days of honour, at the Epiphany, on the Feast of Mary in December, on the day of Astário Māryām, and at the Resurrection. Before they take the Communion together, the husband may pay seven dollars to the Confessor, who will give some to the poor after changing the dollars into tamuns. Also each will have taken the religious oath, saying, "May He perforate me as the Cross! May he obliterate me as the Gospel, if I have violated the Flesh and Blood!" Then returning home they will feast their kin.

30. Even if a man and a woman are married by Communion, they will not hereafter taste of it under one shamma, but she will stand in the woman's part of the church separated from him. If her husband goes on a journey and she visits a church to take the Eucharist, the priests—if they do not know her—may deny her and call for the Aggāfari, who is their Chamberlain. And he will question her saying, "Who art thou that sayest that thou art a Communicant?" So she will reply, "I am a communicant. My husband has gone up (to Addis Ababa) and I am a pure qworābi." And calling her Confessor she will make the religious oath, saying, "May the Word of Your Reverence reach me! I am pure!" For this oath is imprisonment by word, and none will utter it falsely. But, if she is known to none, she will not receive the Eucharist, for not even the Governor himself (unless he is married by Communion) tastes of it after his birth, but standing upright must wait while others receive the Flesh and Blood.

31. A Christian man may be affianced to a maiden in the Lenten Fast which is called Hudādei, and will agree to marry her on some day after the breaking of the fast.



For on a fast day he may not marry a maiden, nor may he give a feast. If, however, she is a woman already married there is no impediment, nor need the parents take thought for drink, save only for beer and hydromel; for butter and flesh may not be eaten in time of fast. When a woman is married on a Friday or on a Wednesday, flesh sauce is not given at the feast, but they shell peas and, blowing away the husk, boil them for a sauce. For the man who has made the 80 bond with a woman may have tarried long without visiting the parents, and may arrive suddenly on a fast day to take her. Then the father will say, "Thou mayest not feast with us to-day, for this is a fast day and not one for indulgence." So the parents will escort them forth with their mouths alone, having given them to drink only coffee and swillings from the beer jar. And she as a dowry may be given a slave or twenty dollars, but the father will not receive the price of the wooing, for she was not a maiden, or the parents may be given two thick shammas by the man.

32. Of husband and wife they say, "The man knows but completes by the wife." For in a matter of a loan a wife must complete the counsel. Also there is a saying, "Precede her not! Give her not twice!" If the man drinks beer before the wife and she is pregnant, she may suffer harm in yearning for the liquor, and if she drinks twice she may become drunk and revile him, and they two may quarrel.

33. But a poor man or one with a bond wife in another land may hire a garad or servant girl, who is called a qallābi<sup>1</sup> since she prepares his food and feeds him. So he will make agreement with her that she draw water, grind maize, and wash his feet. Thus he will save money, for

<sup>1</sup> vb. 213.

two dollars monthly will suffice her, and in place of buying in the market hydromel, beer, bread, and sauce she will prepare all these in his house. When they make the agreement it will be before a judge and four witnesses and two spokesmen—one for him and one for her. So his spokesman will make solemn stipulation, "Having given into her hand ten dollars, I will pay her hereafter twenty dollars a year as a salary, like a trader and a soldier. May Menilik die!" Thus she becomes his qitir<sup>1</sup> wife, since she is hired and is not "possessor of half," for their money is not in common.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 245.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DIVORCE

1. If a man quarrel with his wife, she may cry, " Having married before the *chiqā shūm* and a thousand guests, I bid thee share out with me the money that thou didst count out, for we are husband and wife." For the *chiqā shūm* is the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it, and he may have been the judge present at the marriage. There is a saying, " May the *chiqā shūm* be my third judge—my *silūs daññā*—my eighth witness be the 1,000 guests ! " For the officer is the third party sitting next the witnesses of husband and wife.

2. The husband may cry, " Why didst thou go to the town without my consent ? " or " Why dost thou talk with So-and-so, whom I dislike ? " So he may forbid her again and she may transgress his order and annoy him. If she says, " I will not obey thy word," he may beat her till she cries out, " Release me ! " And he may refuse, saying, " *Min abbāsh !* I will not release thee ! " or he may say, " Go ! What care I ? " Then she will cry, " Go, call my spokesman ! " and he may refuse. So she will go herself and return with her spokesman and a divorce judge and two witnesses, while the husband will assemble his *Nagar Abbāt* and two friends. Then his spokesman will declare, " *Menilik yimūt !* I divorced my wife, *Múlunash* ! He who saw thee let him marry thee ! " And her *Nagar Abbāt* will reply, " I divorced

<sup>1</sup> Lit. " Thou art full."

my husband, Walda Yohannis!<sup>1</sup> May Menilik die!" Afterwards they will each call two sureties for the 80 bond. If she is a half wife, they will divide the partnership money in half, for she was not hired. If they have lent money outside, they will agree to share it when received, or, if he has lent fifty dollars to some stranger unknown to her, she will cry, through her spokesman, "Bring me my twenty-five dollars or call a surety before I release thee!" Then the elders may say, "Nay! Give him a week or a month to search for the man!" and will cause the Nagar Abbāt to grant him time. But if the husband pays not on the day appointed, she will imprison his surety till the debt is paid. For when a man unties his wife, his house is untied also, since he must divide his goods and become the poorer. Marriage and divorce are of no great account save that her dowry is a grief to him.

3. If there are children still at the breast, they will remain with the wife till they grow up; but he must pay for them the qalab ganzav—the food money—two or three dollars a month. After the child reaches three years, the father may return and take it away or may leave it with her, saying, "Stay with her! What wilt thou bring me but trouble?"

4. An evil man will spend his day in the town, and on his return home there will be strife. For she will complain, "Leaving me alone at home he has cast me aside as an ancient dame and made me the watchman of the house. Thus does he mock me, though I give him no cause for wrath, and I am humiliated," and will cry, "Release me!" Morning and night she may complain to the elders with prayer that they procure her divorce,

<sup>1</sup> "Son of John."

and after a while they may compel him to loose her. But for these ancients it is toil only, for they receive not even two or three dollars for their pains, since God created the elder to be a reconciler and a judge. Therefore do they bear labour and make reconciliations, knowing that God loves them and will reward them.

5. If after marriage the husband secretly borrows money from strangers without the knowledge of his wife and dies, she will not pay the debt. But if both borrowed together, she must pay all, and not her half alone.

6. A man leaving his 80 wife in Shoa may go to the border country and marry there another bond wife. After a year, when he returns to Shoa, his first wife will worry him, saying, "Bring my share of the money for the year in which I toiled alone!" and her spokesman may also accuse the husband, saying, "As thou didst marry her by bond, produce some dollars or thou shalt be punished!" and will persecute him. If he has not the dollars, he may have heritable land, and, when the judge has valued it, she will take her share. Being ignorant of accounts, they will count out with peas the cost of her clothes and food. If the husband has been away three years they will account each year separately, and thus she may receive 300 dollars. But she may not know that he married a second bond wife; otherwise she would call her Nagar Abbāt and demand her account and order him to obtain her release from the 80 bond, and press him unceasingly. So, if he listens to her, he will depart and seek out the husband in that far land, leaving in sorrow his own crops to the beasts and birds. Having found the husband he will before the judge cause the bond to descend from off her. Or he may refuse to go, saying, "When thy husband returns,

we will make an assessment," and will call a surety for the delay.

7. But a clever man, fearing trouble with her, will take thought saying, "I have this 80 wife in Shoa and will not add a second 80 wife to her." So he hires a woman on a salary, and there is no sin on him. If he is foolish, he may cry, "Curse her! Let what happen happen!" and will add another 80 wife above the first. Even if this second wife knows of the existence of the first, it worries her not, nor will she be annoyed, but will say contentedly, "I have married on the top of her and not below!" And she who remained in Shoa may find a lover, who on days of festival will buy her a sheep, or will send her a dollar's worth of meat and butter for her head and scent and money wherewith to buy cotton, and she will work for him a fair robe.

8. But that first 80 wife, hearing that her man has taken a second 80 wife, may in her anger travel to him and rail, saying, "Thou didst marry a samānyā<sup>1</sup> above a samānyā—a daññā<sup>2</sup> above a daññā, a shaññā<sup>3</sup> above a shaññā. This was not seemly for thee. Be punished!" If he is defeated at law, he may be fined forty dollars as one caught with another woman, or the elders of the land will reconcile them, if she is willing to go to them without accusing her husband before the judge. For these ancients will finish the affair, weaving it and twisting it around; for, if they fail on the first day, they will on the morrow soften the matter and cause it to grow cold, quoting proverbs and saying to her, "This man has done no great wrong. Do thou, my sister, abandon the affair!" and may thus with honeyed words persuade her.

9. If a light woman bear a child whose father is not

<sup>1</sup> 80 (See wife)

<sup>2</sup> Judge.

<sup>3</sup> Hump of the ox.

her husband, it is called *dīqālā* or bastard. These bastards are like Muhammed Grāñ,<sup>1</sup> who was violent and obstinate in the fight. Once a *dīqālā* was disputing at law with one who was legitimate, and the latter cried, "Of shammas the single-fold, of children the *dīqālā*, of grain the *bāqeilā*<sup>2</sup> are the worst." But the *dīqālā* replied, "The *nātalā* repels the months, the *bāqeilā* repels hunger, the *dīqālā* repels the foe." And if one call another "*dīqālā*," he will pay three dollars in judgment fees, and ten or fifty ounces of silver, according to his power.

10. If a man injures the eye or hand or foot of his wife or burns her body with fire, he will pay in compensation eighty dollars, nor will the Government receive twenty dollars for the judgment, for there can be no judgment between husband and wife. But if a slave had been so ill treated, there would have been no compensation, for the slave would have been set free in recompense.

11. Any man can be a judge in matter of divorce and release them from the 80 bond, even if he is a "descending water" judge<sup>3</sup>; nor need he tell the big judge. But in Shoa there is a divorce judge to whom each will pay two bars of salt, or one bar only if they are tenants.

12. In days of old there was a poor man with a wife, who prayed to God, "Please, my Master, take heed and show me how I may live!" And God answered, "Thou man, thy livelihood shall be the speech of the beasts and birds of the earth, both wild and tame. I have given to thee only to know their talk! Know this!" As he returned home from where he prayed, he sat under a big sycamore near to the house of a rich man. There a hen clucked, and the man understood her words, "There is a

<sup>1</sup> Devastator of Abyssinia, 1527-1543.

<sup>2</sup> Broad bean.

<sup>3</sup> p. 169.

python inside this sycamore. The land is waterless, but if the tree be cut down from the roots, a mighty water will pour forth." But the python replied, "And thou hen, if the master or his wife slaughtered thee and ate thee, he would beget a son." For the rich wife was barren. So the poor man abandoned his journey home and cried before the house of the rich man, "If a great water gush forth for you, what will ye give me?" And he replied, "Every householder shall give thee a cow." Then the poor man ordered the countryside to assemble with axes to cut down that tree, and when it fell they found the python coiled round a spring, which gushed forth as it fled. Then the poor man cried, "And now what wilt thou give me if ye have children?" and the rich man said, "The half of my goods." So he ordered him to slay the hen; and he begat twelve sons.

Afterwards he returned home, but kept the matter a secret, refusing to tell his wife of his power. So she oppressed him sorely, so that he told and lay as one at the point of death. But from his bed he heard the dog of a neighbour say to his own dog, which was gnawing a bone, "Give me this bone!" But the man's dog answered, "Thou! thy master will not die yet and thou canst eat another day; but my master is for death, and save to-day a bone may not be found." And the other dog asked, "What is it? Why will he die?" and the poor man's dog replied "My master's wife bade him relate his secret, but he refused; yet she was insistent, till at length he told her, though the telling is fatal. So here we are, and this is now the tazkâr."<sup>1</sup> Then the neighbour's dog asked, "Why! better divorce her than die!" So the other asked, "How is this divorce? What is it?"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. X.



And the neighbour's dog answered, " Let him divide their monies into two and release her ! " All this the sick man heard, and cried out for the elders to assemble that he might be rid of his wife. Which was the beginning of the ceremony of divorce, for of this they were then ignorant.

## CHAPTER IX

### DEATH

1. When a man dies, Michael clasps him by the right hand and the Devil by the left, and thus they ascend to Heaven. There the two argue before God as at a law-suit, the Devil crying, "She, this soul is mine! Continually she worked sin and evil!" But Michael may answer, "She is not thine, but mine!" and together with Mary may cry, "Bring forth the scales! Let us weigh this soul!" For the man may have eaten and drunk monthly of the *ṭabal* and *ṭādiq*<sup>1</sup> of Michael to honour him, or when a beggar stretched forth his hand in supplication, saying, "For Mary!" that dead man may have given him silver. Therefore they will cast the soul into the scales, causing her to be weighed, and if Mary but throw her shadow over the soul, it will weigh heavy as gold and the pan will descend. So the Devil will depart, releasing the soul, and She will enter it into Gannat, which is Paradise.

2. But the soul of one who did evil upon earth goes with the Devil, who after chewing it in his mouth takes it to the fire of Gahānnab<sup>2</sup> and there sports with it—at one time steeping it in fire, at another in water, and at another casting it into darkness. Therefore he who can will give alms to prisoners and to the poor at the enclosure of a church, fearing and honouring the shrine that it may keep him in remembrance. For he will say, "May the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ch. XV

<sup>2</sup> Shoan — b instead of —m

shrine guard my soul that it be healed and be not like to theirs."

3. A man who has destroyed his soul with his own hand obtains not righteousness nor is he buried in the church, but his soul goes to Gahānnab, since he died by his own hand unslain by God. A proud man, seeing with his own eyes the flood of a river, may cry, "With my own strength will I cross!" If the water swallow him down, his soul is not purified nor is the corpse buried in the church, but on the bank of that river.

4. A man will desire the priests to supplicate Christ for the soul of a dead relation and will pray him to pardon it, lest he set it in a place of Kúnaneî or damnation. For the priests say that a damned soul enters into the fire of Gahānnab and into darkness or into icy water which shrivels the skin, each soul by turn being the sport of Satan. Also, as one may see on the pictures in the churches, Satan will bite and chew two souls at once with his teeth, and then, dragging them away fast bound with ropes or chains, will deliver them to his master the Devil; for he will have snatched them from the custody of Michael.

5. If a man is sick<sup>1</sup> on the day of a Mass, his kin may go to the church and after listening to the Mass will supplicate the priest or deacon after the Communion to give him some of the Holy Water. This they will carry home in a decanter or small bottle and give to the sick man, who, drinking some, will pour the remainder over his hands and wipe his face and body. Also may they pray the Confessor to asperse the hut with his Holy Water. At the entrance of the priest all will stand in silence till he ask them, "How passed ye the night, my children?" and answering, "God be praised!" they

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 100.

will go towards him to kiss his Cross, which he will draw out. With its top he will touch their foreheads and lips, and lastly they may kiss the base, but if he fear that any have been chewing tobacco, he will not present to them the Cross, but only his hand to kiss. Then one will say, "Absolve me, my Father!" and he will reply, "Work not evil! God absolve thee!" Afterwards, murmuring prayers, he will sprinkle the Water over the head of the sick man and over his body, saying, "Tsa Manfas Qiddūs! By the Holy Ghost!" Also will he cause him to drink of it, together with the company, and will asperse the hut. But the rest he may not pour away, and calling the mistress of the house will tell her to add it to the leaven jar, which is called the būhaqā, and to the ferment for the beer. So he will bless them and sit to eat and drink.

6. If there is no Communion on that day, a man sick to death cannot receive it, for the priest may not be pure, since before administering the Eucharist he must cleanse himself and live purely for three days. But if it is the day of the Communion and the house is not far distant, the priest will first give it to all in the church before going forth to the house of the sick. But all the laity who receive not the Eucharist will wait till the chief priest may return and give the Absolution. First will go the Aggāfāri, or Chamberlain, crying out to all, "Zor balu! Zor balu! Make way!" and then the chief deacon carrying the water while the other deacon sounds his hand-bell; after them come the assistant priest with the chalice and the chief priest guarding the Host. Also will one watch behind, lest a man riding surprise them. Nor may the priests ride, for the Holy Element may not be carried upon a beast. If a great man is ill and fears to die far from a church, the priests

may consent to carry the Communion to him. But they must bear the *tābót* with them, and at night it will rest in a tent, for the Eucharist must be consumed on the same day.

7. If a sick man fearing death desires the Eucharist, the priest will refuse it, unless he swear, "If I recover, I will become a monk," or, if he is married by the bond, "I will marry my wife in the church by the Crown, so that we each become a Communicant, and if she refuses, I will leave her and become a monk." Thus it is that most men taste of the Eucharist but once—when they are raised up to Christianity at Baptism.

8. When death approaches, a man will send for his Confessor and ask for Absolution, after confessing his misdeeds. Then will he cause to be written down on paper his last will—"Between — and — I divide my goods. Let them set forth my Memorial Feast!" And this is the paper of the *nizāzej*, which the Confessor will guard and read on the fortieth day after death at the feast of commemoration.

9. After death they will wash the body and make the *magannaz*,<sup>1</sup> which is the laying out. If he be a *mahaiyyim* or layman and not one of the *kāhināt*, who are the clerics, they will fasten together with thread the big toes and the thumbs with hands upon the groin and close the eyes and mouth. Then they procure a *shamma* or *kutā* or *jāno* or piece of cotton shirting and wrapping up the body lay it upon a bed or upon a bier. Also outside they may fold round a palm mat. A great man will be wrapped in a rug which will be buried with him, and some one will have run to the Sacristan to beg for the church stuffs to lay over the bier. These are like the covering of a

<sup>1</sup> vb. 643.

mule's saddle and like the *maggwonātsáfia* that covers the Host, and will be drawn up after the lowering of the coffin into the grave. Also the long thin scroll that is carried on the neck cord in a leather case may be drawn out from its cover and is stretched from the forehead to the big toe, being tied with thread. Some call this scroll the *lifāfā ṭsidiq*<sup>1</sup> or the *kibir tawāt* or *tibirtawāt*.

10. If the dead man is a priest or deacon the body will be folded in matting and the church stuffs will cover the bier. But the laying out will have been different. For a priest they will tie the hands and cross the arms upon the breast; for a monk the right hand will cover the right eye and the left hand the left eye; for a deacon the right hand will be bent up upon the right shoulder and the left hand upon the left shoulder.

11. In olden times the kin fired rifles after the death, but now they have abandoned this custom. If once they wail, all will know; nor may that body pass the night unburied unless the tenth hour be already passed; for then there is no time to dig a grave and the church may be far. But a clever husband, after laying the body with honour on the bed, may curtain it off, saying to others, "She is well but tired. Let her sleep!" So he will send secretly to his kin, who may be far distant, and wait till they be assembled before he wail. Yet, if one know of the deceit, he may accuse him before the judge, saying, "Thou hast done a shameful thing! Thou! Why didst thou cause the body to pass the night?"

12. Once a *Dajjasmach* was ascending to *Addis Ababa*; when passing through a forest his soldiers found a corpse that had lain three days, nor were the features visible. But he had a scroll which they loosed from the neck, and,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. VI. 9.

the stitching being cut, they found his name revealed. This they took and sent to the kin, saying, "Here ye be! Look at this scroll! One of your blood is dead! Take it and break the evil tidings to his wife!" So the kin will tell her as soon as may be that she may not eat in ignorance with the *irm* upon her. For the *irm* is whatever is unlawful and needs spittle, and when she is told, she will spit upon the ground before raising the wail. If a man dies, they will not always make the announcement to the kin at once, for, if that relation is in the plains, he may fall prostrate and illness may smite him. Also, if a man dies in the plains, his companions will agree together, "When we return to the highlands and to our homes, we will send some one to tell her." Afterwards, having returned home, they will pass that night and, on the morrow at cock-crow, they will reveal to her the tidings, and say, "Thy husband is dead. Bring forth the *irm* by thy spittle!"

13. The Confessor or another priest will point out the place for the grave, and if they have no spades and picks and crowbars for the rocky soil, the kin will go round the town to borrow them. First, the Confessor may take the hoe and dig up himself a little soil and bless it, turning himself to the four quarters and saying, "Egziavheir yibārik!"<sup>1</sup> God bless (it)!" While some dig, others will be preparing the coffin, if there are wood and nails, for the box is sent empty to the grave to await the bier. The grave they will dig so that the head may face the uprising of the sun with the feet towards its entering-in. Then they bring the empty box and measure it and seek stones for the four corners of the grave, lest the white ants devour the wood.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 293.

14. If the Confessor is strong, he will go to the priests and say, "Come! Make the Absolution!" and they will ring the large bell (or, if there be no bell, they will beat a piece of iron), so that men hearing will say, "Some one is dead!" So, if there is money for the Absolution, the priests will come with the deacons and scribes and will stand in the house; nor will the small drum be lacking which they call the *kábaro*. And, bowing, the kin will pray them, "My Fathers, beginning from the house make the Absolution!" Then the scribes with the deacons will recite the Psalter in such a way that it be soon finished, and the priests all together will read from the *Ginzat*, which is the Funeral Service written in *Gí'iz*—each his portion—while the chief priest and deacon cense the body, circling round it. These two will wear the black silk coat and shirt, but the rest will not have changed their clothes. Meanwhile the scribes, standing apart begin the "*miwāsīt*" and thus having made the *guzo fitát*<sup>1</sup> for the "journeying" of the body, they will set forth to the church, the bier born by the kin. In his right hand the chief deacon will bear the umbrella of black silk and next will come the chief priest holding a silver Cross in his left hand and the smoking thurible in his right. Having gone a little way he will stop and say to the bearers, "Let him rest!" and again the priests will read all at once portions from the *Ginzat* held up before them by a deacon at the head of the bier which is placed on the ground. This resting, which is called the *māsārráfia*,<sup>2</sup> they make seven times in all—one in the house, five on the road, and one in the church, and for the seven Absolutions the priests will receive dollars. Thus it is that a poor man may not obtain full

<sup>1</sup> vbs. 667, 789.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 430.



*Absolution after death.* The seventh and last Absolution is in the church enclosure.

15. When they arrive at the enclosure of the Church, the bearers with the priests and deacons may enter into the Dajja Salám, which is a building inside the enclosure but separated from the church ; but the kin and friends wail outside in the enclosure while the scribes recite their Psalters and the sound is heard of drums, both large and small, together with the sistra. Or the kin may pass to and fro round the bier lamenting and causing lamentation. For if he is a great man, they will have his belongings and decorations—maybe a horse caparisoned and a servant wearing his shirt of honour made from “ Abdullah Kāni ” or wearing the lamd made from the lion’s mane and carrying the gold shield.

16. After the priest has finished the Absolution they will carry the bier to the door of the church—if a male to the male entrance, if a female to the south door. There the priest will recite the “ nisaggid lakán ” while the bearers dip the bier thrice. But if the dead man is a priest (or a monk who was a priest), they will have set the bier at the entrance to the Maqdas—the dīrgat maučā<sup>1</sup>—for none but Abbātāchin or the Nīgús or Nīgist or the priest who served the shrine may rest within the Maqdas—and his body will be laid inside the door of the Maqdas for the recitation of the last Absolution ; since his honour is great, like that of the Nīgús and Nīgist who have the siltán.<sup>2</sup> But a monk or a nun will not be carried into the Qiddist.<sup>3</sup>

17. Thence they carry the bier to the grave, the chief deacon in front, and next the chief priest swinging the thurible, and then the scribes singing the “ miwāsit.”

<sup>1</sup> vb. 524.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 133, “ authority.”

<sup>3</sup> p. 96.

At the grave the kin place the body in the box, or if perchance the body were already in the coffin, they unloose the ropes that fasten down the lid, and pray over it before clamping it down with nails. So they lower it into the grave, and the priests—two or three or four together, so that it is quickly finished—will recite the “*hā dagnāka*.” At the end the priest, taking soil, will cast it down into the hole, saying, “*Nafs yimār!*” But had the dead man been the *Nigús* or *Nigist* or *Pāpās* or *Éčagei* or a *Qomos* or *Koros*, the five priests would have lighted each a candle and laid it inside the grave, while a sixth priest stood near holding the *Mósoba’Warq* draped in the cover which is called the *maggwonātsáfia*.<sup>1</sup> Lastly the chief priest will turn over into the grave all the incense and red-hot coals from the charcoal underneath.

18. Strong pieces of cleft wood are laid upon the corner stones at the bottom of the grave with an empty space between the wood and the coffin. Over the wood is smeared a plaster of mud with the straw of millet trodden into it; this they do that the soil may not reach the box. This arrangement is called the *dimmaman*. The soil is then heaped in, and over all they pile stones; but the bier remains on the heap, until it perishes or until a Grave House be built over it.<sup>2</sup> For even a poor man may afterwards collect his friends and build a house with stone walls over the spot hiding the site of the grave; or a booth suffices.

19. Before the kin scatter home, they will assemble outside, crying, “*Ai! Ai!*” flapping their hands or the corner of the *shamma*. Then the Confessor coming will make the prayer of Ascension for them, and those who know it will repeat the “*Abbūna za ba-samaiyāt*.” And he will bless them, saying, “*My children, my brethren,*

<sup>1</sup> p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 64-5.

may such a tribulation not come upon you ! God give you a burier in your old age ! ” So each will depart, having received Absolution. If the dead is a great man, the priest will tell them to come on the third day for the Communion which those who can will make for the dead. But a poor man will say, “ I have no silver. I will give a feast in forty days.” After they have returned home each of the friends and neighbours will go to the house of mourning taking what he can—a pot of beer, a kettle of hydromel, a can of coffee and some bread. For they feast that day, and, if the house is small, will pitch a tent. And so for several days they may hold a feast, till all have been to see them. This is the saying, “ The dead eat not dry and drink not water.” And on the day of death for the “ drying of tears ” ten pieces of bread and a pot of beer may be given to the priests.

20. The Confessor will take for himself as the rule the full dress of the dead man—the hide and horn cup also. Some he will keep and others he will give to the poor.

21. In Holy Week beginning from Palm Sunday there will be no Absolution for the dead. For the priests are busy with fasting and with prayer in the churches and cannot go to the house of death.

22. When a great man dies, they may carry his body to Dabra Libānos, where they bury it, building a stone house over it ; but the bodies of poor men they place near by in the caves and leave. Thus it is that bones abound, and the monks that are there kindle them in the fire for the boiling of their nifro.

23. If a priest is alone in a poor shrine, he will say to the kin, “ I am alone. To-morrow at dawn, when the bell is tolled, we will make the Absolution in the church.” So, when the “ nisaggid lakán ” has been read, they will

carry the body to the grave and the priest will read the "hā dagnāka" and throw soil into the grave; afterwards the laity will fill it up. But the kin may be shocked and may complain, saying, "Over a warm corpse no Absolution has been made."

24. If a man who has been raised up to Christianity become a sorcerer deceiving the people, he may not be buried in the church. Nor may any priest become his Confessor, for the Head would seize that priest and appointing guards would send him up to Abbātāchin. And he will be flogged with whips and his authority will be taken from him.

25. An evil father, having borrowed money and consumed it, may die without paying his debt. Then, if the kin have possessions and land, the creditor may forbid them as they are carrying the corpse to the church. For, if he will, he can cry, "By the Nigūs! By the Bed! Take not forth this corpse from the house nor bury it!" and will forbid them by a judge. So they will agree, saying, "Nay! We will pay thee!" lest the body remain unburied. Thus it is that men relate the saying, "A bad father, being banned, leaves his son naught but debts, but a good father causes him to await hereditaments and cattle."

26. On the day when the mārdo, which is the tidings of death, comes to a man, he will scrape and rub his cheeks with his shamma or barnós,<sup>1</sup> till the blood appears, and will place cotton upon the sore. So, when an acquaintance meets him upon the road and sees the sign, he will ask, "What has happened to thee, my brother? What of thine is dead?" And the other will reply, "My kin, So-and-so, died." Then the friend will say,

<sup>1</sup> poncho.

"I had not heard. And now God strengthen thee!"  
So he will answer, "May he give strength to the dead!"

27. A man whose father or mother or kin has died will darken his clothes and will dye his shamma, drawers, and shirt all one colour—black or yellow or red—and his barnós he will invert so that the red edging of the leather called bāhr arab be outside. To blacken them he will hollow out a hole in a reed-bed and stamp the clothes into the damp mud. Also there is a leaf from a thorny shrub named the qanṭaffā which, collecting, they boil in water and soak the clothes in the liquor. For a yellow colour, if there is no flower of the sūf, a wood is found from which they peel the bark, and this boiled up colours the clothes. Or there is the blue which is used in the washing of clothes, and this being dissolved in excess in the water causes them to appear sky-blue after the steeping. Thus their mourning is apparent to all men. According to their heart and love they will wear such clothes, laying them aside after three months or half a year or a year. These mourning clothes are not often washed, nor, when washed, will they use soap with the water, lest the colour fade. Some will buy khaki for their shirt and drawers, dyeing the shamma with the flower of the sūf, which is picked in September among the millet, unless it has been sown for its oil. As to the mourning of women, in addition they will cut their hair, whether it be plaited or fuzzy, or will shave the head with a razor, and if there is an ear-ring, they will lay it aside.

28. If a priest or a deacon loses one of his kin, he may not wear clothes of mourning nor may he rasp his face, since such is a shame and his authority might be taken from him. Or the Confessor would lay a fine upon the deacon and a heavy penance, and might shut him from

the church for forty days till the sores were healed. Also it is a sin, for the clothes of a priest should be white *like the face of Christ*.

29. For one man to mourn alone is a disgrace, and therefore the mārdo or announcement of death is made by many together. Yet, if the news comes to one alone in a strange land, he can but squat upon the floor with neck leaning on his knee and tap the ground with a finger.

30. A man's brother was travelling up to Shoa when his companion shot him and, taking his slave and mule and rifle, came to Addis Ababa. But the slave spoke to a stranger, who caused the murderer to be seized. Then the Government told the Governor of the West, saying by telephone, "So-and-so is dead. Tell his brother to bring forth the irm." So the Governor sent to the Nagādrās and the Nagādrās to his officer and the officer to his servants. But it was the second hour. So they waited and passed the night in silence, and calling each other at cock-crow—being five in all—they went to the brother's house and roused a servant, saying, "If we call the master, he will know. Do thou go and wake him, saying that our Master calls him." But anxiety a few days before had girded the wife, so that she started up at once in terror.

31. On a day of festival they will delay, so that the kin may eat and drink and rejoice. But on the morrow they will pass the news. When the kin of a man has died, a friend will write to him, saying, "Only now did I hear of the announcement. God give thee strength till we meet each other!" Or he may write, "Not only thou but all of us are undone. Herewith for coffee five dollars."

32. If a man comes from afar bearing tidings of a death, he may fear to go straight to the house of the kin and may sit in the church, till men spy him and tell the friends of the kin. And they in wonder will send to ask, "Why didst thou go to the church?" Then he may lie, saying, "Yester-eve I feared for the dusk and so, taking my Psalter, I sat here, meaning to come to you on the morrow at dawn. Not from malice did I delay." And the kin will say, "Either my father or my mother is dead, else thou hadst not done so." But he will deny it and give fair words, protesting that all are well. But afterwards he will go out and seek others and say, "Brethren, So-and-so, whom ye did know, is dead. Pass on to the kin, I pray you, the tidings." Then they will assemble and warn some old servant inside the house of the kin, saying, "See to it that a light be not lacking within, for at cock-crow we shall come on bitter business." And, when they have told the kin to bring forth their *irm*, the kin will leap and burst into wailing, while the others take hold of them, lest they do themselves hurt. Then the friends will go and collect beer and hydromel and coffee and bread, and will have them carried to the house of mourning for the lamentation. So all who hear will pay at once a visit, each bringing a gift of food or money, and they will sit at talk. Some will stay only a few minutes, but many pass the night there gaily chatting, lest the kin mention the name of the dead and call him to mind.

33. When a chief dies, those who are not related will grieve only with the eyes, but the kin and servants will don a dirty shamma and the black woollen poncho over all, nor is the shamma doubled. Those who can will lay aside the large shamma and will wear a thin

single shamma under the poncho, first dyeing it. For none wear willingly this single and thin shamma, unless they are poor. For Ras Tasammā in the West all men grieved, and his slaves and servants, if they saw a woman in the market with unshaven head, laid hands upon her and plucked out the hair, for they all had shaved their heads.

34. After some years the kin may come suddenly and say to the priest, "We will take up the bones of the dead and carry them to Dabra Libānos or Ziqwālā." So they will pay two dollars for the Absolution and one dollar for the tribute of the Communion and will furnish a full banquet, assembling in the dark to slaughter a sheep or a goat over the grave. The blood they will pour into the grave and will leave within the entrails of the animal in place of the bones, for without such a slaying the moving is not meet. So having restored the soul they place the bones in a box, and leave them on the window of the church till their departure (since they may delay), nor may the bones be stored in a hut.



## CHAPTER X

### THE TAZKĀR<sup>1</sup> OR COMMEMORATION

1. Those who have the money will hold a commemoration on the third, seventh, twelfth, fortieth and eightieth day, and after six months and one year and seven years. But those who are needy will cease to hold a tazkār after the year is past, and may even sit perforce silent, if there is no money even for the feast on the fortieth day, which is the greatest of all.

2. On the third day there is the tazkār of the "sālist" when, even if one is poor, he must bring three baskets of bread, six pots of beer, and six dishes of sauce for the priests and a load of wood for the kindling of the fire. Also there will be the money for the Absolution—two or seven dollars—and a few raisins at eight for a tamun and two or three tapers. Therefore, if a man has not the dollars, he must perforce call a surety and borrow them. Nor is bread alone fitting for a commemoration, and a poor man must provide at least one pot of beer for the poor, one for the Head of the Church, one for the Chamberlain, and three pots for the priests; so also six dishes of sauce, whether of meat or of vegetables, with a hundred pieces of bread. Else he may not make a commemoration.

3. If the burial house is not ready, the food and drink may be consumed in another grave house, for these houses are many, or, if there is a multitude of mourners, they may eat in the Dajja Salām. Inside the burial hut over the grave the floor is cunningly smoothed over with plaster so that none would know that a body lay buried

<sup>1</sup> vb. 537. Cf. pp. 130, 132.

beneath ; also the walls may be of stone, but the house is doorless. For a large burial house is eight cubits square, and there the Confessor may sit on Sundays reading his Psalter while the kin enter and lament. Also scribes wander here and there from church to church and from town to town, and may pass the night within. So too the monks and poor may sojourn there, and a passer-by, searching among his clothes, will give a trifle to them, saying, " For my soul."

4. Thus those who can will hold a tazkâr for the drying of tears on certain days after the death. Such will speak with their Confessor to hold the Qwurbân, which is the food and drink that they buy, calling in the poor to share. In time of fast the priest will hold the Mass at noon, and they will eat at the eighth hour ; but on Sunday it will be when the birds twitter at the first dawn and the eating will be at the third hour. On other days it will be at the third hour, and they will eat at the fifth.

5. There the kin will stand listening in the nave. And the priest, having taken the money, will recite prayers, and all will pray, saying, " Pardon for us the soul of Êkalei<sup>1</sup> ! " But, if the officiating priest within the Sanctuary cry, " Pardon the soul of So-and-so ! " forgetting the true name, the kin will accuse the priests before the Head, and the two dollars may be returned, because the priest did not call the name of the dead. Thus it were better that a man lack not as friend or kin a scribe, a reciter of the Psalter, or the son of a priest. For the priest, reciting carelessly up and down, may gallop along so as to gain his rest swiftly, and will not clear away the weeds nor absolve cleanly. But, if there is present a strong man of priestly blood or a

<sup>1</sup> So-and-so.

knowing scribe, he will cause to be filled up exactly the price of the Absolution and, being acquainted well with the language of the book and its measure, will constrain the priest when he says, "The Absolution is finished!" For the learned man will cry, "Ai! This was omitted!" and perforce will cause him to complete the words. If the priest refuse, the relations of the dead may complain first to the Head, who will chide the priest; and, if the Alaqa listen not, they may complain to the Governor, who may chain or scourge the priest. For he will be angry and cry, "He did not stint the money of the Absolution. Why didst thou err against the ritual? Call a surety!" and will compel that priest, so that another day he may fear and absolve justly.

6. When there is a tazkār, the Chamberlain will say to the priests and deacons, "To-morrow there is a distribution of food. See that ye come!" First the kin will assemble and share in the Mass, and afterwards the Aggāfāri, going to the Dajja Salām, will divide the feast and calling the clerics will bid each to take up his share, which is called a wog. For they will eat there, and the kin will wait upon them. If there is not enough for the feast, the priests will complain, "We are not satiated and he has stinted us!" So the Confessor may seize the provider of the food, crying, "Call a surety!" But they will not punish him. If a bullock is slaughtered, the wog of the Sacristan is the hide and tongue and head and stomach, that of the servitor is the heart, for the "aqqābīt" was the old woman who pounded the grain for the Eucharist; the Head or Guide Master will take the frimbā, which is the breast bone with its meat; and to the Chamberlain belong the ribs. If there are many pieces of bread, the Head will take fifteen (like the Guide Master

and Āfa Mammir who take the inner "tāllāq" <sup>1</sup>), with a pot of beer and a platter of sauce, while the Chamberlain will take but ten pieces of bread together with beer and sauce.

7. On the seventh day there should be at least seven of each—seven baskets of bread, seven pots of beer, and seven dishes of sauce, together with a dollar for the service—for the wheat, raisins, incense, wood, and tapers. On the twelfth day the usage is twelve of each with the dollar, but on the thirtieth day one pot and one dish will be sufficient. On the fortieth day is the mulu qāreizā—the full bier—and there is no limit, for the chief of the commemorations are on the twelfth and fortieth days. A great man will invite the priests to his house after the Communion, having built a booth for them and set aside many jars of hydromel. But he who is not great will send his feast to the Dajja Salām, hurrying it along when he hears the bell toll. And the Chamberlain of the church, standing there to receive it, will ask, "Is there the wog?" and if the man reply, "Nay! It suffices only for the priests," the Aggāfāri may turn him away. For the Chamberlain and Head will desire to send their share to their homes, but the ~~Sacer~~ristan may eat his wog in the Door of Salutation, if he so desires.

8. For the eightieth day and for the feast after six months there is no rule, and at the end of a year only a great man will produce a Commemoration, killing many bulls and preparing maybe five jars of hydromel and four hundred pieces of bread for the clerics. Those who can will drive bulls with them and bring beer, hydromel, and sauce, and afterwards such will receive thanks in writing—"So-and-so aided us with the tazkār, giving so much food and so many bulls."

<sup>1</sup> Haunch.

## CHAPTER XI

### FASTS

1. After the cock has crowed on Wednesday and Friday men may not taste of meat nor butter nor milk nor eggs nor cheese, till the cock crows again on the morrow. Nor till the noon on these days may they taste of food or water. After the noon they may eat bread and sauce of vegetables, and may drink coffee, hydromel, and beer. Yet for the fifty days after the breaking of the long Lenten Fast of Hudādei—after Fāsikā<sup>1</sup> or Easter Sunday—a man may eat and drink what he likes on Wednesday and Friday without distinguishing these two days from the others. This till Pentecost, for the Fast of Hudādei has been long and wearying. And beginning again from the Wednesday after Pentecost they will separate once more these two days; but for forty-five days after Pentecost the priests and great men will fast, for it is the Fast of the Apostles, which the vulgar call the Fast of Abbo. Also, if the Epiphany or Christmas fall on a Wednesday or Friday, there is no fast.

2. The Fast of Lent is fifty-five days, reckoning back from Tensā'ei, the day of the Resurrection, for it begins at dawn on a Monday, after men have eaten their fill on the Sunday. This Sunday is named the Qibalā<sup>2</sup> or Reception. On the Saturday after the fourth hour one may eat meat, but the drum may not be struck. Two weeks before Hudādei on the Monday, Tuesday, and

<sup>1</sup> vb. 787.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 202. "

Wednesday was the fast which the people call "Nei, Nei," for they do not know that Nánawei was the city to which God sent Jonah. During these fifty-five days till the sixth hour none may eat even grain nor may he even drink water, but after noon he may taste coffee and bread and vegetable sauce; but the "produce of the cow" and flesh are forbidden. So a man, having finished his supper at the third hour of the night, will recline and fast till the sixth hour of the next day. Yet within a fast a faster on the morn of Saturday or Sunday may eat of that which is not the "produce of the cow." First he will prepare bread on the griddle and raking embers within a small potsherd, called a "gal," will burn incense saying, "My Master, my God, grant me to pass the day in safety!" Then he will divide up that bread into pieces and share it with all. If more bread is lacking, he will then eat a handful of roasted grain—barley or chick-pea or even maize, which is cheap.

3. Whether it is the Fast of Lent or of the Assumption, a man will rise and go to the church without eating—only washing his hands and rinsing his mouth—nor will he eat before he returns at the third hour. But the priest and the deacon may not even chew grass. On Saturday a man rising will drink coffee and his wife will prepare bread and sauce, but the produce of the cow is "irm" and prohibited. In the evening also he will eat only of a vegetable sauce with cabbage and roasted linseed and unripe black pepper. The cabbage they cut over a wicker platter upon a piece of wood, and place in a small pot upon the three stones of the fire. When the water boils, they add the cabbage and rock salt to taste. Also, having heated peas upon the griddle they grind them coarsely on the mill, and then winnow the flour over the

mill in a platter by blowing on it as it falls ; after that it is ground finer, and after being sifted is stored away in a gourd. When the dish on the fire is ready, they heat in it red onions cut up small, adding water and ground salted onions from the store. Lastly they add condiments such as black azmūd, grey pepper, garlic and bāsóbilā to complete the vegetable sauce.

4. The day before the commencement of a fast is called a wāzeimā, on which a man should eat his fill. For till the time of Yareid the zeimā was unknown, and when the hymn was first revealed to him after seven years' endeavour, he is said to have exclaimed, " Wai ! zeimā ! " But, if the fast begins on a Thursday or a Saturday, there can be no wāzeimā, for the day previous is a fast and one will eat only the vegetable sauce. Also the Saturday before the Lenten Fast is a wāzeimā. On a wāzeimā he who can will slaughter an animal and share the meat with others and eat buttered and meat sauces.

5. In Lent many grow tired and thin, but he who is rich may buy fish. If a man is ill and refuses to drink milk, his friends may obey the order of the doctor and compel him to break his fast ; but afterwards he will tell his Confessor, so that the Purification may descend upon him. Of old they said that fish drank water and ate sand, so that men could eat them in time of fast. But a clever man cutting the throat of a fish found blood in it and said, " Ye who say that there is no blood are mistaken. Does it not come forth to eat grass and leaves ? Therefore eat not fish in Lent ! " So some, believing, abandoned it, but others ate in silence though they saw the blood. Once or twice a priest may speak to an eater of fish, but if he refuses to obey, he will let him be. Those who live in the lowlands, where the soil

is dry and gravelly and grain is scarce, will consume all that they come by—fish and beasts of the forest—saying, “We did this since hunger was killing us, and we slaughtered beasts in time of fast and drank milk and caught fish with hook and net.” But when they return to the highlands and find a priest, such must have the Service of Purification read over them, and this is the Qeidar; so also, if he have known an unbaptised Islām or Galla woman, he may not regain purity till he has been dipped and baptised again by the rite of the Qeidar and has given alms to the poor and fasted in atonement.

6. If the doctor says, “Give this sick man milk with eggs and some alcohol in his broth!” the kin will say, “Ishi! So be it!” For they will not say nay while they talk with him. But afterwards they will take counsel, and one will say, “Why should this be? Even if he dies, let him at least die pure!” And another will reply, “If we give him this and he be cured, he can receive Penance. What matters it?” So they will dispute, and some will do one thing and others another. For if they ask the Confessor, he will reply, “It may not be! Let him not drink! Withhold! ~ what matters it if he dies, having kept firm his religion and his purity?” All this because it is with fasting that God defeated the Devil, for, when our Master Christ said to the Devil, “Fast!” he replied, “I cannot!” and in this was overcome. But if that sick man breaks the fast and is cured, the Confessor will say, “Fast now that the Penance may descend upon thee! Also do prostrations and give money to the poor which I will divide for thee! Produce two dollars!” Then, if that priest is a good man, he will give the one dollar to the poor, and the Purification will descend after the priest has said, “God absolve



thee ! " and after he has sprinkled Holy Water upon the man, who will kiss his hand and Cross.

7. An akfāi is one who towards the end of the Lenten fast abstains from food and drink on the Friday and Saturday, eating and drinking nothing till the cock crow and the gun is fired on Sunday dawn. For such they will prepare linseed with honey, and when the cock crows, will give them a horn full, lest their parched throats be cracked. Some abstainers on the Thursday will go to the church to prostrate themselves, and returning will eat their dinner. In olden times men used to remain three days without food and drink, but Jān Hoi,<sup>1</sup> seeing that many died and that many had not the strength or were too old, restrained them. For men considered that if the fast of abstinence were not performed, God would not reckon the Lenten Fast which they had already suffered. Nor need young unmarried girls and boys fast thus, but only the knowing one of mature years ; but during Lent the young may fast till noon save on Saturday and Sunday, or on Wednesday and Friday only. Yet in the coffee country many, rising at dawn, will drink coffee secretly, if their flesh defeats them and they fail to hear the word of the Gospel.

8. There was an abstainer who began his abstinence on Friday. But on Saturday his wife baked some wheaten bread and placed it in a basket against the wall. Now its smell was very pleasing to him, so that he cried out, " Ho ! Thou ! Pray, bring it and lay in on my stomach ! " So she placed it there. And again he said, " Put it higher on my chest ! " Which she did, but he cried, " Put it yet higher near my nose ! " Having done so, she said, " Antu ! It is not meet for thee ! Eat

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor (Menilik).

and rest ! " Thus being overcome he ate it. But afterwards he told his Confessor saying, " I broke the Fast in this manner, since need was sore upon me and like to kill me." And the priest gave him counsel, " My son, work not sin ! God absolve thee ! He who has the strength may fast, but one who cannot must miss one day. Henceforth abstain one day only ! "

9. When the priests fast, they perform the Qánonā as a mortification, and in sadness ponder and read their Psalter from cock-crow by the light of a taper, and throughout the day eat dry grain only and drink water. So, too, some great man who has suffered abasement may say, " I was once rich and now possess nothing. Henceforth let the world remain apart for me ! " And he will strip off even his fine clothes and will be like the priests, haunting the church and kissing the door, and, if he is learned, will read his Psalter, beseeching God. Nor will he wait upon the gates of the rich, but only upon the gate of God, and of him men will say, " So-and-so is given up to Qánonā and prayer," and will grieve for him.

10. The Fast of Hudādei is not exact with the month of the year, but crosses from month to month, so that men will ask the priests as to its beginning, for they alone can make the reckoning. On the twenty-seventh day comes the Sunday named Dabra Zeit, and the week before the breaking of the Fast is the Week of Pains, which, the learned call Himāmāt,<sup>1</sup> but the vulgar call Māmāt. In this Holy Week there is no Absolution given, for the priests are deep in prayer and meditation. An ignorant man, meeting a priest upon the road, may say to him. " Absolve me, my Father ! " But he will

<sup>1</sup> vB. 418.

reply, "Not to-day! It matters not when Easter has come!" For this forbidding of the Absolution begins from Palm Sunday after the hearing of the Mass, nor will a priest absolve even the Nigús or Nigist, and if any one dies, they will read over him quickly the Ginzat. Also, when Māmāt enters in, is it the kūbat wárarā—the snatching of the dung before another picks it up, for the splitting of wood is forbidden. Nor in Gondar, Lasta, and Tigrei may slaves work in Holy Week. And for two weeks may no man plead at law, and if one accuses another, the judge will say to him, "Rest three days after the Fast is broken and come again on Wednesday on the fourth day outside Māmāt."

II. After the first week of August, when the month of Nahásiei enters, the fast of the Assumption enters also. This is honoured because of old the Virgin Mary was ill and about to die upon her bed with the Apostles around her. At that time Jesus came with the Angels and departed after giving His Mother's soul to Michael. And on the morrow, as they were carrying Her upon the bier to burial, Jesus a second time came to Her on the road, and taking Her body<sup>1</sup> took it aloft to Heaven in a cloud. Afterwards, when Her body had ascended, the soul and flesh met together again. So the fast is called Fílsatā from Her "upraising," for a tree may be standing upon the edge of a hill with weakened roots and, if a small wind blows upon it, the tree may be uprooted and men will say, "That tree fállasa.<sup>1</sup>" The death of Mary was on the day called Astárió Maryām, and on the 16th of Nahásiei (August 22nd) She was revealed to all, and "Astárió" means the "showing" or "being seen." But the yearly honouring of Astárió Maryām is ten days

<sup>1</sup> vb. 769.

after the Epiphany, and the time of Astário lasts till the Sunday before Lent. For Mary died on the 21st of Tírr (January 29th), and was taken by the Angels to Paradise, and there the Apostles sat in an assembly, saying, "Reveal to us!" So the Angels brought her body in August and gave it to them for burial, but she returned unseen to earth. There Thomas met her as she travelled in a cloud, and she said, "I have ascended! Tell the Apostles!" But he answered, "Why is it that thou hast ascended? Thy Son failed to show us the Resurrection. Thou too, hast thou failed?" And she said, "I have been seen by thee, but not by the Apostles. Take my Saban, my holy vestment, as a sign to them." So going he found them sitting, and asked, "What of Our Lady?" and they cried, "We have buried her." But he answered, "Nay! I met her ascending!" and Peter rose to open the grave, saying, "Thou didst lie!" So he gave them the shroud, and for this they fasted fourteen days.

12. On Sunday night before the fast of the Assumption they eat till the cock crows at the next dawn. During the fast he who has a conscience will stretch himself upon the floor on matting, while his wife remains alone upon the bed or the raised couch which is called the madab. Thence he will arise at dawn and go to the church to kiss the door and supplicate God, for with his forehead he will touch the right and the left post of the door, kissing them, and then prostrating himself will kiss the bottom threshold. Thus daily will he render obeisance to the church. But he who has seen the tape-worm may not stand within the church, but must make his salám from a distance, till he have drunk koso and become clean. Nor if his wife has borne a child may he kiss the door, till the Confessor has been to asperse the hut with the

Holy Water. Nor may a woman go till after her cleansing and the washing of her shamma and body.

13. Till the fast is broken the priests from within the church will recite their Psalters and interpret the Gospel and let it be heard by all. For one priest will read in the Gi'iz tongue, and a scribe or monk or some learned man will interpret in Amharic for the people outside. And all hearing will ponder sorrowfully, and lay hand to jaw, saying, "My God, how wilt thou do for me?"

14. The fasts that are ordained in the Fet-ha Nigist (which are The Dooms of the Kings), are Lent, the Assumption, the Fast of the Apostles, the Gahád of Christmas and the Christmas Fast, the Gahád of the Epiphany, and the Fast of Nánawei. The Gahád or Gād is the denial of nine hours, and if Christmas is on a Sunday, a man will fast on Friday till the ninth hour and on Saturday till noon, waiting till the Mass be finished. If Christmas is on Monday, he will fast on Saturday till noon and on Sunday till the third hour. If Christmas comes on other days, he will fast till the ninth hour of the day before, nor, when he breaks his fast, will he touch the produce of the cow. Those who fast the Christmas Fast will begin at dawn on the 2nd of Tāhsās (December 11th) and will abstain from the produce of the cow till the cock crows on the 29th of Tāhsās. But such are only the priests and great men, for it is only before Easter and at the Assumption that all will fast—even the lads who are growing tall. The Tsigei Fast is not written in the Book, and therefore only the monks observe it; it begins on the 25th day of Máskaram (October 5th) and continues till November 14th. Also, on the 17th of Yakkātīt (February 24th) is the Fast of Heraclius who is called Harqāl or Hirqāl.

## CHAPTER XII

### FESTIVALS

1. On Good Friday men will go to the church to prostrate themselves, remaining there from early morn till the ninth hour. Then he who has no tent will go to his Confessor and say, "My Father! Lo! Since Passion Week entered I have eaten damp meat!" or "I have trodden damp!" And to such a one the Confessor will order, "Prostrate thyself a hundred and fifty times!" Or another will say, "I have washed a sham-ma!" or "I have ploughed my land!" or "I have weeded my ground!" or "I have cut my wood!" And to some he will give fifty and to another seventy *prostrations*, and each will *prostrate himself according* to his sin. A woman too will confess in small matters, but will conceal her greater sins, saying, "I have ground at the mill!" or "I have broken wood!" and will make the allotted prostrations.

2. The officers on Good Friday cause their tents to be pitched and carpets to be spread. One who is learned and clever will sit there reading his Psalter, while others make the prostration. But no prostration may be reckoned till the Confessor come and appoint a number, and if a man prostrates himself before, this is only the "hudád" and a labour in vain. The women will prostrate themselves near the women's burial ground, but the place of the men is near the male burial houses.

3. When a man speaks thus of his sin, the priest

strikes him lightly on the shoulder with a wand, which is called an arčūmi or tsabárt, and this striking is named the ṭibṭābei. This wand is for Palm Sunday, on which day it is given in the churches by the priests. Also small boys go round the town and distribute it for presents. Also, it were well that the wand be of the wairā, which is the wild olive. Afterwards a man will make the sigdat, a friend counting for him, and will make the prostration thus. Causing his feet to meet he strikes his shoulders behind with his hands, and then raising his hands brings them down upon his thighs in front; afterwards with clenched fingers he falls upon the ground, striking it with his knees. So with his forehead on the ground he kisses it, and leaning on his hands raises himself up. This he may do fifty times before resting and completing his full number. A very fat man will prostrate himself ten times and, when he puffs, will pray his servant, saying, "Do the sigdat<sup>1</sup> for me!" For after the tenth prostration the fat inside him, being obstructed at his neck, will irk him and make him sweat. But if he is a great officer, the priest in fear will give him but ten or twenty sigdat. So, too, a woman will call her maid, saying, "Prostrate thyself in my stead!" But a strong man will pass the morning in prostration, even if there is no sin in him, saying, "For Egziavheir!" and towards evening will call his Confessor; but, even if he say that there is no sin in him, he will be given ten or twenty prostrations, which he will quickly finish.

4. When the blood fell from Christ upon the Cross, it dripped into the grave of Adam beneath and there rose up from the dead all those who exceeded five hundred and were less than six hundred. The thief on the left

<sup>1</sup> vb. 126.

was sent into darkness, but he on the right went before Adam into Paradise. For these two robbers long before in Egypt had been thieves, taking turn day by day. And when Mary passed bearing on her back the Babe, it was the turn of the left-hand thief, but the right hand thief forbade him, saying, "She is like the sun. Rob her not!" Also the Babe took the sword of the thief and broke it, and when the thief asked, "How canst thou repay evil for good?" the Babe, taking the sword, fitted together the pieces and made it whole.

5. Easter Saturday is Qidāmei Shūr on which the good news went forth. For on Friday the Devil was bound by cords, and Christ descending to Purgatory sent forth to Paradise all the souls that were in darkness; and, as they went out, they cried, "Niseibiho! We thank thee!" Therefore late on the evening of Good Friday the beating of the drum is fitting.

6. On this day towards the third hour the priests and deacons go forth with the drum, having donned the clothes of ceremony and bearing umbrellas. With armfuls of reeds they go round the town singing, and visit the houses of the great, crying, "Our Master, Jesus Christ, has been traced! Satan has been chained!" Thus do they give the good news. Also will the deacon tinkle the bell, nor will the Cross be absent from the hands of the chief priest. So they distribute the rushes and collect many dollars, for a man will give, saying, "Because ye heard the good news—for the Master, for the Creator!" And having blessed the givers (for a European may give them ten dollars) they will return to the church and sit to divide the money, giving the larger share to the Álaqā for the sake of his honour—for his is the superiority.



7. On Easter Saturday every faster will pass the day and night expectant, and when the cock crows on Sunday morn will start up from his bed, listening for the sign. For in a town they will fire the cannon and maxims from the Governor's house and all will fire rifles. Also the Government will cause to be blown trumpets and flutes, and the drums will be beaten that all may hear. Then before all else the faster, for his parched throat, will mix together linseed and honey, and after moistening his throat will wash his hands, saying, "Thanks, Master, who didst cause me to survive for this!" Afterwards he will bring near a savoury sauce with bread, hydromel, beer, and cheese, and having eaten and drunk, may lie down again or may sit talking.

8. Tensā'ei<sup>1</sup> is the day on which our Master Christ was found. For he disappeared, and his Mother lamented in sorrow and the whole world was sore vexed. On the night before Easter Sunday many will go to the church and will pass the night, till the cock crow, making the prostration on clenched hands till they are sore. If there is one among them who is ill, the priests will cause him to drink the Holy Water, and will give to all to eat the bread which is named tasfā—the hope. After the cock crows, one will say to another, "So he has undone for us the bridle of the fast!" and will return home to praise Him with food and drink. This tasfā is the wheaten bread which old women and nuns have baked at home on the Saturday and bring to the priest to bless at the eighth hour, for at the sixth hour they say the Mass and afterwards bless the bread. So, too, on any Sunday this may be done. Also on the morning of Easter Saturday, when the priests go round the town,

<sup>1</sup> vb. 365.

they leave two deacons in the Beitaliheim (which is the church kitchen), who, breaking wood, bake wheaten bread upon the tse'edūt (for, being holy, it may not be called the vulgar griddle), till they have prepared fifty or seventy loaves. After the Mass those who are learned and know the mysteries—such as scribes and the instructed—will remain behind. Then the deacon will carry out the bread, covering it with a cloak or vestment as it lies in an honoured vessel, and the priest will give to each; but the doors are closed and guarded by the Chamberlain, lest any of the profane approach. Thus also will they eat after any Mass when wheat is abundant.

9. After the second hour of Easter Sunday one friend may send to another either a letter or a message, saying, "So Christ untied for thee the bridle of fast!" and he will answer with salutations.

10. Christmas is on the 29th of Tāhsās which is the day of Qiddūs Bāla Wald—that on which our Master was born—and on this day also is the Christmas of the Greeks; but that of the English was on the 16th of Tāhsās.

11. Christmas is named Lidat<sup>1</sup> or Gannā,<sup>2</sup> and the Christmas game is also called Gannā. This is played by boys and grown men, but the boys begin it and will be playing while yet a week remains to Christmas. At the start they divide up the space chosen—the market place, maybe—and take their stand one quarter of the town against another, for the district of the Governor may oppose that of the Head of the Merchants. Then they take counsel, each choosing a Father or Captain and inform each other, saying, "So-and-so is our Captain."

<sup>1</sup> vb. 506.

<sup>2</sup> γέννα.

The ball is cut from a piece of rounded wood, and the stick is curved at one end. So, having measured out the ground, they determine a "house" in the middle and, digging a small hole, place the "Gannā" within. The two captains begin, and that side which first defeats the other by hitting the ball to the boundary stands there and reviles the other before beginning again. Towards evening the victors will depart home abusing the other side in great content for their master. For this Christmas game there is a saying, "The Master may not grow angry," and there is no compensation, even if an eye is lost or a hand is broken or a tooth.

12. Twelve days after Christmas on the 11th of Tīrr comes the great festival of the Epiphany. Before it there is an absolute fast of nine hours, and the day after is the yearly festival of Michael. On the day before the Epiphany men say, "To-day is the 'kátarā' and the shrines will go forth." This kátarā being a "gād," till the ninth hour men taste not grain nor water for honour's sake, but afterwards a man will eat bread and will drink coffee, hydromel, and beer. In one big town there may be three shrines—Mary, Michael, and George. On the kátarā about the ninth hour the p̄iēsts, clothed in their black silk mantles and silken robes, will bear forth the three shrines and descend to some neighbouring water, which is called Ṭemqat <sup>1</sup> Bāhr "Epiphany Water" and may be chosen by the Governor. For one year, while going to inspect the water, a Governor met suddenly a funeral on the road; therefore in fear he sought out another water.

13. Because of her honour Mary is carried in front; yet had the shrine of the Redeemer been there, he would

<sup>1</sup> vb. 712.

have preceded even Her. When they go down on the katarā, the priest will carry the Mósoba Warq, "the Golden Basket," upon his head, for if a deacon touched the tābót, it must be re-blessed by the Abbūna. Also another priest will bear over it an umbrella of silk, lest the sun or rain smite the tābót. Nor will the Governor be absent; and the multitude in front and behind escort the shrines—the priests singing hymns and the men shouting, "Hai lōga, hai lōga shibó!" or "Yibalahāl, yibalahāl jibó!" meaning that war is coming. And the women cry, "Esei! Lalo, Lalo! Esei, Lalo, wadājei!" for Lalo is Satan. Also those who have horses will ride and gallop to and fro in front, honouring the shrine. If a river is lacking, a spring will be found where they will pass the night. Some will pitch their tents and others will build booths in which to rest; but the priests will read and hold the Mass in a tent in the midst of the crowd. When the cock crows, the priest will bless the waters, and if these are scanty, will sprinkle them over all near by. But if it is a big stream, the men, casting off their clothes, will dance and enter the water; but the women look on. For the bathing of their bodies and face is the ṭemqat or baptism, and afterwards they will dress again. But the officers and women do not take off their clothes, and cry only, "Asperse me, my Father!" and the priests will cast water till their hands tire. So at the third hour they return to the churches having raised up the arks, and will make a circling round the church before they enter. This circling is named the me'ewād, just as the auda amat is the revolving of the year.

14. At Addis Ababa Michael will not return with the other tābóts, but will pass another night at the water, for the day after Ṭemqat is the Bāla Mikāeil, his festival,

and he would refuse to be moved. But at Īlu Gannat<sup>1</sup> his tābót is poor, since he who established it is dead, and so the priests bring him back perforce. In the church of Mary will he pass the night, because his church is far from the town, and on the 12th of Tīrr the priests will carry him back and will crown him by encircling the church three times before restoring the tābót to the Altar.

15. The game of gūks may take place when a girl is married or at the Festival of the Cross or at Epiphany. The horsemen divide themselves on some broad meadow, each having in his hand three wands to hurl at the fleeing foe. For he seeks to hit him on the head or the back. Some wear a shield on the arm to ward off the wand, or if he is one who fears not to fall, he will twist round and strike away the flying wand with his own. The retreating foe will gallop without touching the bridle and will only take hold of it when he reaches the place where they pull up the horses. The fallen wands a servant will collect and restore to each. One side in turn will drive back the other, each in turn galloping back from his end and urging on his horse with thigh and instep. Sometimes a horse is wounded by the point of the wand or a horseman will fall. At the finish they give their horses to a servant to drape and lead home, they themselves returning on mules. For an ambling mule has more honour than a horse.

16. This wand is slender and is some three cubits in length. If it is crooked, it is scorched over the fire and straightened.<sup>2</sup> One officer, playing during the dry weather, hurled a wand at his fleeing foe, who turned his horse, and the wand pierced the ground one cubit and a span.

<sup>1</sup> Gorei.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 179. „

Thereupon the Chief Judge of the Governor cried out, "Play not again! If thou hadst struck that man, thou wouldst have killed him and his horse." So his kin restrained him, lest he incur a judgment debt. Also on the day of the Epiphany another man pierced and broke the wooden back of the saddle of his adversary and the wand, passing on, pierced also the cartridge belt and waist-cloth, resting against the body. So men took counsel and forbade him, saying, "Come not again to our sport with a wand—only with empty hand!"

17. Ten days after the Epiphany on the 21st of Tīrr is the day of Astário Māryām, for this was the Revelation of Mary. At the third hour all who can, from far and near, will go to her church, nor will they drink or eat before. If the day is one of fast, the priests delaying will not bring out the tābót till the Mass is finished about the fourth hour. Then all kiss the ground as the priests come out, and the women raise the ilil. Slowly they circle round the church three times, while the women remain standing in a body clapping their hands and singing, "Isei! Lalo! Lalo! Isei! Lalo, wadājei!" and "Nei, nei! Emmīyyei<sup>1</sup> Māryām! Nei, nei, Emmīyyei Māryām!" But the men will walk in line, some in front and some behind, with rifle sloped on shoulder, and he who has no rifle taking a spear will brandish it, singing, "Ehu lōga! Ehu lōga shibó!" And there will be a priest to left and right holding over Her the silk umbrella and another will hold aloft the Cross and another will swing the censer, nor will the sistra be lacking. Also a scribe will carry one or two drums, which are narrow at one end and broad at the other and covered with sheep's skin. This they beat, and raise aloft the sistra in unison

<sup>1</sup> "My Mother."

according to the millāš,<sup>1</sup> which is the refrain. In front will go the striker of the masinqo or violin, with the officers and soldiers and blowers of the flutes. Near to Her will be a Chamberlain as usher, who will restrain with a long rod those who approach too near. After the entering in at the third encircling all will return home to commemorate Her with the holy drink and food.

18. Likewise on the 23rd of Mīyāzyā (the 1st of May) they carry forth in procession the tābót of George, for this is the day of his yearly consecration.

19. On the first day of Genvot is the Birthday of Mary, the Līdatā<sup>2</sup> Māryām. As Genvot enters on the 8th of May, each woman will call to her neighbour and they will drink coffee together and will place upon the fire a pot filled with water. When this boils, they add to it some of each grain that they have in their homes—all except millet, dāgussā, and barley—and boil them up. This they call the nifro, and towards the eighth hour each woman grasping some in her hand casts it towards the forest. This they do without going there, and soon return laughing to their huts and saying, "Nifro, sickness! Go there to the forest! Go!" Then they consume the nifro, and after mutual blessings go to their homes. Towards evening, having boiled coffee, they bake the millet bread named qīṭṭā and heating linseed on the griddle pound it in the mortar and laying it on a plate add salt and water to it. The qīṭṭā they then break in pieces and throw here and there, having touched it with the linseed, and afterwards eat the rest, supplicating Mary thus—"Līdatā, my Mother! Make me to arrive month to month, year to year!"

20. On the 16th of Nahásiei falls the Feast of the

<sup>1</sup> vb. 48.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 506. „

Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and three days before—on August 19th—was the Festival of the Transfiguration, which is named Dabra Tabór or “Buhei.” For Tabór was a mountain, and when Peter said to Christ, “Show us thy Bāhri Abbāt,”<sup>1</sup> He took Peter, John, and James up the mountain and brought forth Elias from Paradise and Moses from the grave. Then it became light and the boys guarding the kine thought that it was day, and their mothers went to seek them, carrying wheaten bread which is called “buhei.” Thus it is that they crack whips and beat each other in play. A week before the end of the fast the boys will have stripped thin bark from a tree and twisted it into ropes. Armed with these the boys of one quarter advance against those of another, and they will whip one another in play. If an eye is lost or an ear is cut, there is no sin, nor is there warm blood in the accident, though on any other day than a festival the judge would order a striker to pay two dollars for the warm blood.

21. On the night of Dabra Tabór the grown men too collect bark, and tie together pieces three to four cubits in length, so as to make long torches. These they fire within the house and rush out singing, “Buhei! Buhei! Balu!” and supplicate God, crying, “Make year to arrive to year! Repeat for us year by year!” So also a mother will hold her male child in her arms and set in his hands a tiny torch outside the door. Also for him his mother or sister will bake a wheaten loaf called the *tibinā* and on the next day all will eat of it.

22. At the end of Nahásiei come the supplementary days named Qwágmiei.<sup>2</sup> The years are in a cycle of four—the years of Luke, John, Matthew, and Mark. The year

<sup>1</sup> “Natural Father.”

<sup>2</sup> There are 30 days in each of the 12 months.



of Luke is a Leap year and there will be six days in Qwágmiei instead of five. Thus from September 6th to the 10th will be Qwágmiei, and the New Year will begin on the 1st of Maskaram, which is September 11th; but in a Leap year it will begin on September 12th.

23. On the third day of Qwágmiei is the *ṭabal*—the Holy Water—of Rūfāeil. If it rains on that day, it will make dull the bite of the snake and of any poisonous animal; but if there is no rain, the snakes will be awake and mordant. For the rain is his Holy Water and all will rejoice.

24. On the fifth (or sixth) day of Qwágmiei a man will arise before the birds taste the water, and go to a stream to wash himself, and for one who cannot walk they will bring water. If a woman desires she may descend to the stream, for it is not yet light. The evening is New Year's Eve—the feast of St. John<sup>1</sup>—and at night all will burn lights above their doors and will run round with flaming torches. And the light is called a *čibbo*. Also the young girls will have plucked a grass called *engiča* for the honour of the year and will keep it all night. On New Year's Day at dawn they will go round singing, “*Ábabāi arančā, ábabāi jānoeṛ*.” Others will sing, “*Yearly may Enqwuṭāṭāš give thee!*” To most they give the grass as it is and will receive presents, but for officers they will tie on it flowers and anoint them with scent. So they may receive three or four dollars. *Enqwuṭāṭāš* is itself a grass and is also the name of New Year's Eve.

25. Then the heavy rains will be finished and there is a saying, “*After Maskaram has dawned there are no rains, after the cock has crowed there is no night.*” On the 1st of Maskaram (September 11th or 12th) one friend

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 21.

will write to another, saying, "So God made thee to cross from the year of (John) to the year of (Matthew) in safety," or "God it is who caused thee to arrive from year to year." And he will reply, "Amen! He it is who made all of us to arrive." Or one may say, "Amen! So God made thee to arrive from year to year and I, when the year changes, am well content."

26. Beginning from Enqwutātāsh till the Festival of the Cross on September 27th the men will go round at night begging and singing, "Ábabā! Ábabāš lábabā!" and others reply, "Ábabā! ilil bīyyei ligbā!" If they go to the house of a great man and he gives them three dollars, they will sing blessing him, "Ya bir zanázzana, Amiein! amína!" and say, "May He make you to arrive thus with the revolving year, and cause you to live who didst give us so!" If a mean man gives them nothing, they may curse him and wail, acting as if one had died, and will fashion a bier covering it with a shamma. Then they will dig up the ground, saying, "So-and-so is dead and we are burying him!" So they will cast a curse on him and presage ill, so that he will tremble, saying, "The mouth of lads is evil," and will say to them, "My brethren, pardon me! I erred being niggardly towards you. Pray spit for me that I be cured of the curse!" Else they might spread false news of his death. So they will come back and spit, crying, "May God reject all the evil that we wished against thee with our mouths! May he rear thy children for thee and, when we come thus yearly, may we not fail to find thee as thou art!" and will depart blessing him and leaving him fearless. Once they went to the house of a great man who, sparing his money, gave them but one dollar. This they threw back at him, saying, "Have a ring made of it for

thy leman ! " and he stood in amazed silence. But they will run round quickly, lest other lads precede them, for if a man has given to the first singers, he may say to the next band, " Did ye not come before ? I have given to the company of So-and-so." Thus he will repel them, nor may they curse him.

27. While yet a week remains to the Feast of the Finding of the Cross, which is called Masqal,<sup>1</sup> the cunning man will go into the forest and cut a withy which is named the *čubbo*.<sup>2</sup> This he will place in a dry spot ; but the foolish man will forget and will not go to cut till the day itself, when he may not find one. These withies at eve on the 16th of Máskaram (September 26th) they light inside the house and then touch the three stones of the fire upon which the pot is set. At the same time they cry, " Thou pot of cabbage, go forth ! Thou pot of ganfo, come in ! " for cabbage is eaten in the rains and ganfo after the rains. This ganfo is a porridge made of flour and the grain is now full grown. When it is dark, they go out to the Dámarā, singing, " *Iyōhā ábabāi !* " These withies may be some twelve cubits long and are peeled. To the top are tied leaves and flowers and in Shoa they will tie on the *āda ábaba*, which is called kello by the Gallas. But in the West the kello does not burst into flower before the beginning of Hedár (November 10th), so that men must search out any flower, lest the wog or custom should perish. These may be white or red, like the *tsigei raddā* which is the rose. But for women there is no permission to collect these wands.

28. The Dámarā is the pole set up by the Governor, and is thick and strong. After a hole has been dug,

<sup>1</sup> vb. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Another form of *čibbo*.

they fix the pole tightly, and after it is erect, men say, "The *alāmā* is erected. Let us go to it!" For it is placed in the centre of some broad open space by the local chief of the Governor. Towards the ninth hour each officer will come with his band of soldiers carrying their withies, and each will set up his own *dámarā* leaning against that of the Governor; but first he and his men will circle three times round the pole, singing, "*Iyōhā ábabāi!*" He who has a shirt of honour will wear it and will carry his decorated shield, which is the *ṭāfā gāššā*, and all his ornaments, for his horse and mule will have on their decorated harness. When all the poles are heaped up, the priests circle round them with the Cross and incense and bless the pile, first covering it with the stuff which is of *shūti*. After them revolve the Governor and officers, each with his band of soldiers, and all sing, "*Iyōhā ábabāi!*" Then they depart home.

29. When it is dark the withies will be lighted and the Governor will kindle the *Dámarā* or will send his servants, singing ever, "*Iyōhā ábabāi!*" After the kindling the lads will sing, "*Ábabā ilīl biyyei ligbā!*" and go round to beg money. So, while they sing, "*Iyōhā ábabāi! Ábabā ábabāš lābabā!*" the Governor may give them a bull, and each European five or six dollars, and others a dollar.

30. Next morning early, before men arise, the *Báldarās*, who is the Master of the Horse, will order his grooms to saddle the horse and mules of the Governor, and leading them by the strap under the bridle, they will cause the animals to trample on the ashes of the *Dámarā*; afterwards the officers will do likewise. Then men taking up the charcoal of the burnt wood bear it home, and breaking it up rub it on their palms with butter and

with a finger of the right hand anoint their forehead with the sign of the Cross cross-wise. For this is the sign of the Cross and the charcoal is the mark. But the women did not go to the Dámarā, yet they also rub in the charred embers, saying, "God repeat me year to year!" In the afternoon the men will meet together in the game of gūks, separating into two sides. An officer will ride and play if he is young, but the Governor may order his Báldarās, saying, "Do thou girth my horse and play!" But a man who is too strong in the arm may not play, for once such an officer cast the wand violently and drove it right through the back of a friend, so that he died. For the friend, turning round on his horse as his adversary pursued him, was unable to catch the flying wand.

31. In Shoa in September or in October, when the young corn is ripe, one friend, before tasting it, will send some to another, who having tasted it, will spit upon his breast, saying, "Master, from year to year repeat me! Make me to arrive year to year!" But in the West the young maize or peas or beans and chickpea will be ripe after the middle of August, and a man will so pray then.

32. Masqal is called a festival, but has no great honour. If it falls on a day of fast, the owner of a bull or gelded ram will remain quiet fasting till the sixth hour. Then he will drink coffee and eat a vegetable sauce. But on the next day, when there is no fast, he will slaughter and will drink milk and eat butter for the festival. At Addis Ababa at Masqal will be the šūm širat,<sup>1</sup> or dismissal of officers and appointment of new ones, but on any day a master may decorate a beloved servant, and especially

<sup>1</sup> vb. 188.

if there is a "gibir." For this is a public banquet due from the Governor to his servants, and so, when men are drinking and eating, the Dajjazmach may call him and give him a name.

33. On the 21st of Hedár, which is the last day of November, is the festival of Hedár Māryām. On this day no man works, for they bring forth the tābót to crown Her and bear it three times round the church as on Astárió Māryām.<sup>1</sup> None may plough or weed or grind. The women—even the nuns—gathered four or five together will dance outside the church, singing, "Emma hoi! Emma hoi!" And the encircling will be as on Astárió Māryām, while the soldiers sing, "Wei yibálahāl jibó! Hai lôga shibó!" Also the rich man will commemorate Her with a feast and the poor man will prepare a pot of beer and one round of bread for the calling of Her name. So, having broken this and consumed the holy food and drink, the guests will depart, after the host has blessed them, saying, "Mary guard you!"

<sup>1</sup> p. 85.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CHURCH

1. If the master of a country desires to build a new church, he will take counsel with his Confessor, and they will choose some spot suitable for the tābót which he honours. So he will measure out the sides and will order the people to clear the forest and to bring wood and fibre and withies. Meanwhile the Qomos or priest or monk will have sought out our Father at Addis Ababa and prayed him to bless a tābót. For this blessing he will pay four dollars as the rule, even if it is a tābót that has been blessed before but has suffered defilement. For Abbūn is the Pāpās bought with money from Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> and for his coming the Government will have paid much silver to the officer of that holy city. These dollars they collect first from the people, saying, "Bring forth the money for the purchase of Abbūn!" Till lately, once he had entered the confines of Ethiopia, he might not depart again even on a visit, but was forced to stay till he died.

2. The tābót itself is a mystery, and he who fashions it is a learned man—a Qomos or priest or monk; but any great man who wishes to set one up in his province may buy it unblest. For every tābót must be blessed by Abbūn in his house at Addis Ababa, where none are present save only the Qomos and the priests, since the laity may not enter at such a time.

<sup>1</sup> The vulgar belief. He is appointed from the Monastery of Deir Antonios near Alexandria.

3. So the priest will arrive bearing upon his head the tābót, and if the new church is not ready, he will place it to rest with another shrine. But since the tābót rests on the Manbar or Altar, the strange tābót will not rest with it side by side, for the chief tābót will be below inside and the stranger will be on the top outside. Thus the two will be neighbours superimposed. If there is no other shrine near, the new tābót must stay within the tent of the travelling priest till the building is finished. Then the Governor will call the Qomos, and they will all escort the tābót with jubilation to the door, and the Qomos having blessed the four corners left and right, the priest will encircle the church three times bearing the tābót, and lastly entering in will lay it in the Altar.

4. A church is not always round, but may be oblong, like that of Jerusalem, with three doors; even if it is round, its doors will be three. In the midst is the Maqdas<sup>1</sup> or Sanctuary, which none may enter save priest and deacon. The entrance of the women looks towards the south and that of the men towards the north; towards the uprising of the sun will be a door for the priests, called the service-entrance. If the church is oblong, there are two party walls rounded in shape, one at either end east and west, but the two other walls on the north and south will be straight. Of the three doors, when an oath must be taken in the church, the men will swear upon the northern door and the women upon the southern.

5. From the northern door to the Dajja Salām, which is near the lichgate and is built on the enclosing fence, should be a space of forty cubits or eighty ǧāmmā, for the ǧāmmā is the length of the foot. So will the Angels

<sup>1</sup> vb. 207.



repel the demons, for, when the priests enter upon the Mass and are busied, the evil spirits may desire to come and destroy them. But the Angels, being spread like carpets below and like coverings above, will guard the priests, lest the devils snatch the Flesh and Blood of Our Master. So also when the priests depart, one Angel will remain to guard the church and the tābót. Also from the eastern door to the Beitaliheim is forty cubits. This Beitaliheim is the house of mystery where the Flesh and Blood of Our Master are prepared; yet on Sundays men may approach and stand near it, if they will—at least, those who are learned in the Psalter, or deacons who have no work, or those who know prayers and carry a rosary. For there is a multitude outside the church.

6. From that part of the Qiddist<sup>1</sup> or Nave where stands the Governor to the other side from wall to wall there is a cross wall. The space to the east of this cross wall is named the Qiddist, inside which stand those who receive the Communion—men to the north, women to the south. In the midst of this party wall are set the Amda Warq<sup>2</sup> or Pillars of Gold—pillars of wood squared left and right, by which the scribes may issue forth and enter. The space on the west side is the Qiniēi Mahleit or Choir, the standing place of the dāvtaras who sing hymns. And this Amda Warq is set up like Our Master Who stands bearing all upon His head.

7. The Mósoba Warq is the "Gold Basket" that rests in or on the Altar, being fashioned of coloured grasses—of *sin-doddo* or *akirmā* like the *saféit* which is a shallow platter used in winnowing. This a man may have vowed to the tābót, or the priests may have bought and blessed it as a resting-place for Our Lady. Around the basket are

<sup>1</sup> vb. 207.

<sup>2</sup> The number of the Amda Warq is according to the greatness of the church.

tiny silver bells fair to look upon, like a crown, which, when the deacon carries the basket around, go "shwā shwā" and tinkle. In one church there may be three or five or seven of these baskets according to its luck. Yet, whatever is the tābót, the Mósoba Warq is the abode of Our Lady, nor may one tell from the basket whether it belongs to the Church of George or any other. Since the deacon may not touch the Altar, the priest takes forth himself the tābót from the Mósoba Warq and gives the latter to the deacon to carry; he himself, clothing the tābót with a gold stuff<sup>1</sup> like the mantle of Christ, will bear it out. Having carried the tābót round the church three times, the priest removes the mantle from round about it, and taking the Mósoba Warq from the deacon replaces the tābót. Then he covers the basket with a kerchief of silk and restores it to the Altar.

8. Perchance some evil stranger may enter quietly and breaking the wooden wall secretly may steal the tābót. And he may carry it away to some distant land and say to the Governor, "I have a tābót. Give permission to me and let us establish it here and let the service be mine!" So they will set up that tābót, and he will be the Sacristan. But those other priests will marvel at their loss and be perplexed, and if there is at hand an unblest tābót that is not holy, they will carry it up to Abbūn and cause him to bless and sanctify it. This they will bring back and perform the Mass as before.

9. On one day only in the year—before the day of the Resurrection dawns—in the night at the sixth hour the priests fling back the curtain of the Maqdas and clothe the Altar with the mantle. So all who will may go to the church, whether they be rigid fasters or not, to stand and look. At the seventh hour they enter upon the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 57, 113.

Mass and return home at the eighth hour, after the closing of the Sanctuary, and await the signal for the breaking of the fast.

10. There are many pictures in the churches. There may be seen George with his horse and Brütāwīt up a tree with the serpent oppressing her sadly.<sup>1</sup> So, too, may be seen Michael with his wings and Mary with Her Babe, and Christ hanging from the Cross with right and left hands pierced by nails and a small cloth about his loins. Such pictures are meet only for the church and not for the houses of the great. Those who paint them are the scribes, who will also paint pictures of officers with their horses and servants. Women are evil, and therefore inside the women's entrance to the church may be seen a picture of the Satans with the Devil, their Emperor. A man lighting suddenly upon these will go forth in gloom and sadness as he ponders over the work of the Devil. In each church also of necessity is a picture of the Tābót according to the name of the Saint. This men may not touch nor kiss, but on Sundays and days of festival the priests uncover it; for on other days it rests clothed in cotton cloth or muslin or linen. Nor are these pictures framed in wood, but are pasted on to the mud plaster of the wall round the Nave, where stand the officers and women.

11. When a country is first subjugated and set in order, a tābót will be brought, and for the priests the Governor will allot gabbārs<sup>2</sup> to feed them; for the gabbār is a serf, and the priests will receive food and dollars from them. But many a shrine is poor because the officer who established it is dead or dismissed, so that the church lacks a founder. Yet a priest will always remain as guardian to serve the tābót and even if the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Perseus and Andromeda.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 614.

house and fence perish, he will receive a salary and the tābót is laid to rest joined with another. Afterwards, maybe the son of the dead officer or the son of a dismissed officer will return and say, "I will take up the tābót of my father," and may rebuild it again and cause it to become again a master shrine and will crown it.

12. If they lack a bell in a church, they will make one of iron in the shape of a bar or gong, or will cut a cubit's length from a hard tree such as the koso, and will beat upon it with a small striker of wood. If the church is far from the path, the scribe or priest will fashion wood some two cubits high and set it up cross-wise upon a tree in the road, so that the wayfarers may not weary themselves by going aside to salute the church. As men pass up and down, they may bring a stone and cast it upon the heap at the foot of the cross which they will kiss before departing. And he who is riding will dismount, removing his hat, and will walk on a short space before remounting.

13. Each church has its boundary and its parish. If the kin desires to bury a man within the bounds of another tābót, the Confessor will forbid them and may even arrest the bier upon the road, crying, "Ba Menilik! Ba-Algā! By the Bed! Proceed not!"

14. A church may be either "dabir" or "gaṭar," but first it was "gaṭar," till a great man begged Our Father,<sup>1</sup> saying, "Release for me the jurisdiction of this Gaṭar!" The bounds of a Dabir are fixed at the time that they carry the tābót round it, after it has been handed over. This they do with Cross and Picture, nor need the fence be the boundary, which may extend outside. So it will become a Dabir, nor will the dead be buried there, and its

<sup>1</sup> The Metropolitan.

honour will be greater. Yet the Governor may die or be dismissed, so that the shrine may become poor once more and unhonoured and will be "gaṣar" with none to care for it, the dead being buried there once more. For a Gaṣar should have three officers—a Sacristan, a Chamberlain, and a Guide Master for the intonation, besides the five celebrants of the Mass, which needs two priests and three deacons; but it has no Ālaqa or Head, nor a Right Master nor a Left Master for the singing. If the shrine is poor, the five celebrants will go to it in their turn from another church to hold the Mass, and on the monthly festival of the Saint all will attend from other shrines, with maybe ten dābtarās to chant and serve.

15. The blind and ulcerous are found outside the churches begging and crying, "Minta Māryām!" or "Ba-inta Māryām! Ba-inta Sanvat! For Mary's sake! For the Sabbath!" So also will beg wandering scribes and monks from a far country.

16. The Holy Water of the church is found only on the day of the Mass. But if a man is ill,<sup>1</sup> a priest or monk who has the authority may read over water and blow upon it, saying, "Egziavheir yibārik! God bless (it)!" And this will be as medicine, yet that of the church has greater power. Therefore a sick man may order his servant to go to the church and fetch some Holy Water, which the priest will pour out into his cup. Or else they may give to him the "innat" from the censer, which is like charcoal, so that the sick man may rub it on his body. But the Holy Water of the church is not meet for sprinkling, so that a Confessor when he goes to asperse a house will take water in a vessel and recite over it from his Psalter or the "Argāno" or the Gospel, and say at the end "Abbūna za ba-samaiyāt."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 50.

17. He who fashions the sistrum is a blacksmith, the beater of iron, and a silversmith. But it were better to call him a sarrātaññā or worker, for by proclamation it has been decreed that none should call another a qaṭqāč.<sup>1</sup> The smith, having flattened the iron, will bore a hole for the handle and will then make two thin wires, and for each three thin rings of iron, which rattle up and down the wire as the sistrum is swung. A skilful man may make the top of yellow brass or of red alloy named madab, and this he will perforate or lay fibre upon it as an ornament. When the dābtarās make the hymn, they swing the sistra according to the tune or qalam. This on Sundays or days of festival or if a man dies.

18. There may be three drums in a church—one nagārīt and two kábaros. A craftsman making a kábaro will hollow out and shape a piece of wanzā wood, leaving it wide within. Having smoothed it outside, he will make the left mouth one span wide and the right mouth one cubit and a span. Then, moistening the hide of the bull in water, he will bind it over each end. A scribe or a priest or a soldier who has the skill will tie to it a sling of stuff and will slip the sling over his head, so that he may dance and serve at the same time. At Addis Ababa on days of festival the priests jump and dance according to the cadence or qalam, and swing their crutches according to the warab, which is the modulation. But the number of kábaros is scanty, though the sistra may be as many as the scribes.

19. In a church there may be many crosses—three of wood and three of silver. Of these last two will be small, but the one will be large, bearing the picture of the Crucifixion. Also there is a large cross of red bronze

<sup>1</sup> vb. 241 This may mean "to castrate."

which the priest will use on Sundays and for constant service, but the large silver cross with the picture of Our Master they will bear forth only on days of festival. The large crosses the deacon will carry in a wooden handle named the matsor, lest he touch them. One of the small silver crosses the officiating priest will hold for his duty, and the others will hang in the Altar, for this has many doors as receptacles.

20. A man may go alone at eve to the house of a friend and ask for the loan of a rifle, saying, "I am going on a journey and fear the forest." Then that man, if he is a fool, will lend it without witnesses and the other will depart. On his return the owner will ask for the rifle and the other may say, "What rifle didst thou give me and when?" And the lender will either expel him in indignation or will abandon the affair in fear of the law, or he will accuse him before the judge, saying, "That I gave on loan a rifle I will give an ambling mule." But the other may still deny and the lender will cry, "More than a thousand witnesses have I loved thee as the foot of the *tābót*. Shut the door of Mary (or of George) and swear for me!" So on a Sunday with a commissioner they will go to the church to kiss the door, and there will be assembled many elders who will ask, "What have these two quarrelled about? Come, let us reconcile them, for reconciliation is our Sabbath meal and God loves such a deed." But first they will inquire of the one, "Dost thou love the words of elders?" and, if he say, "Au!" they will add, "Thou wilt not transgress the judgment of elders?" Then, if he agrees and the other agrees, they will say to each, "*Mān yimút?* Who is to die?" and each will answer, "*Menilik yimút!* Let Menilik die!" Afterwards they will each call a surety for the 80 bond

and each will pay the half of the fee of the first judge. Then they will inquire into the affair, separating the one from the other, and, while one speaks, they will expel the other so that he may not listen. Finally they may say, "Do thou, the lender, not cause him to swear on the door of the church, and do thou not swear but pay him twenty-five dollars!" But if the one is litigious and stubborn, he will despise them and compel him to swear, and the elders will return cursing him and saying, "What an evil man! A swearer of oaths! A darer of the oath! God see for him!"

21. When a man takes an oath at the church, the commissioner stands near and also the Sacristan or priest who has received the fee, which is one dollar and is paid by him who causes the swearing; also for the foot of the commissioner he will pay eight tamuns. Then the priest says to him who is compelled to take the oath, "Do thou swear as follows—"I did not borrow thy rifle and thou didst not lend it to me. Even as I shut the door, may Mary shut me and my tongue!" And, if the oath be false, the accuser will depart, saying, "God see for thee! As thou didst take my property by crime and deceit, may the God of David and the Lady Beizæit of the World take from thee thy life!" On the morrow, which is Monday, the small judge will take them to the big judge, and report the matter of the oath and the accuser, if he said, "I will give a fast horse!" must pay the price which he bet, giving also four tamuns to the clerk and two tamuns to the "simā belo,"<sup>1</sup> who is the interpreter, and will depart dazed and wringing his hands.

22. A Greek once quarrelled with a man over money and accused him, saying, "My money is on thee. Swear

<sup>1</sup> Or "balau," lit. "tell him to listen!"



for me!" And he agreed. So the next Sunday the Greek, having received an oath-commissioner, went to the church carrying a palm-mat, a rope, and a hoe, and spreading the mat near the church with the rope underneath, said to his adversary, "*Come, lie on that. I will roll thee up and drag thee!*" Then those who had come as kissers of the door prayed him to stop, and the accused said, "Such a custom did exist, indeed, but I will not swear by it." For thus the accused is treated as a corpse rolled up in the mat, and his adversary ties him like a dead donkey with the rope and draws him along at the door of the church, and, if the accused refuses, he must pay the money and costs of the judgment; but, if he remained silent inside, he was the victor. Of old, when they tied a man up, a deceitful suitor would scatter pepper beforehand on the mat and cause him who was being sworn to sneeze or cough inside. Then they would cry, "Get up! Thou hast moved and art defeated, for thou hast not lain as a corpse!" Therefore the judges have forbidden the custom and men will now refuse to swear by the palm-mat.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ECCLESIASTICS

1. A boy who desires to enter the service of the Church will go to a church school, of which the teacher will be a priest or a monk or a dábtarā. First the syllabary is learnt, and then the "Fídala Hawária," which are the first seven verses of the Epistle of St. John, the Son of Thunder; also the Gospel and Ginzat, which is the funeral service, and the Tá'mira Māryām, which are the Miracles of Mary, and were written by the Pope Dáqsewos<sup>1</sup>; then the "Gábatā Hawária," which are bound in board and contain seven Epistles—one of James, two of Peter, three of John, and one of Jude. Also he will have learnt his Psalter and the Qalam Sis of John. All these are in the Gi'iz tongue. When three or four boys are ready they will go up together to Addis Ababa to receive the diaconate from Our Father, Abbātāchin, and become "kāhināt" or ecclesiastics. So a boy in about his seventeenth year will become a deacon and will see all the mysteries of the Church save the tābót.

2. The deacon will marry a lawful wife, who must be a maiden, by the 80 bond before a judge and witnesses. When he goes to carry her away, two deacons will be his Mizeis, so that no profane hand will touch her as she is borne from the door. At the marriage the Confessor will cause them to make the religious oath, taking in his right hand their right thumbs and giving first to him and then to her a cup of milk to drink and afterwards a cup of

honey. But at the honeymoon house the deacons, being lads and pure, will hire one who knows the songs to go round the town and beg money.

3. Having lived together for forty days, they will grow accustomed to each other, and on the fortieth day will take the Communion together. This will be on the Saturday in the early morning, but in time of fast it will be at noon. At the Dajja Salām the Confessor will sprinkle Holy Water upon them and they will go to the church—she entering by the women's door. The deacon will wear a black cloak, if such be found, or a white garment and they will make the Qwurbān together under the same shamma.

4. The deacon has no authority, nor is it meet to say to him “*ṛsao*”—“Your Excellency.” So they will live together, and after some years he will go to Abbātāchin at Addis Ababa to receive the *siltān*, which is the power of the priest. For Abbātāchin has the *saban* or scarf of yellow silk which came with him from abroad, and this he wraps around his left shoulder as he sits. Then, laying his cross folded inside the *saban* upon the head of the kneeling deacon, he blesses him, and the new priest will go forth to the market to buy for two dollars (or less according to his means) some muslin to wind as a turban round his head. And under it is a small *qōb* or cap. So having learned the mystery of the *tābōt* he returns.

5. His wife will have made the Communion with him, and therefore men will give her equal honour with the priest, nor will one address her as “*anči*”; however young she is, one will say to her, “Your Excellency, my mother.” If she dies the priest may not marry another wife, and on the day of her death he will be forbidden from the Sanctuary and from the service of his *tābōt*.

So he must go with all speed to Abbātāchin and receive permission to become a monk and assume the qōb. But, if He is unwilling, he will become a trader or soldier or scribe.

6. If they quarrel and she cries, "Loose me! I am going!" he may refuse, saying, "I have made the Communion with thee, nor will I release thee! May Menilik die!" But, if she still cries, "Let Abbūn loose us!" he must take her perforce to Abbūn to abide by his judgment. Abbātāchin, however, lest his authority be destroyed, will send her away, having read the religious oath over her. So, if she still refuses to live with her husband, she must leave him and become as other women. For Abbātāchin will not loose her, and only death can separate one communicant from another.

7. There may be a Līqa Dīyāqon or Chief Deacon to order the deacons in their turn. Such is also called a "Máçanei," because he has the superintendence at a big feast, and he may be a deacon or a priest or a scribe or a layman, provided that he is learned. It is the Sacristan who appoints him. If there are twelve deacons, the work of three will be for a week, while the others rest save on feast days. Of these three one is the "sammonaññā"—the weekly worker—who holds the key and opens the church at dawn and during the Mass is the "frei sammonaññā" holding the Book. The second deacon is called the "gabbāri<sup>1</sup> sanāi" and he stands on the east of the Altar, holding aloft the Cross for the gabbāri sanāi priest. The "nifq" deacon is the aider of the second priest and is the "fim çāri<sup>2</sup>" or raker of embers, for this second priest is the "nifq aţāñ<sup>3</sup>" who swings the censer. When the Gospel is finished, the nifq deacon

<sup>1</sup> vb. 614.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 750.

<sup>3</sup> vb. 444.

walks round the Nave holding it so that the communicants may kiss it, and the second priest follows. So they return to the Sanctuary and the Book is laid in the Altar. If it is Sunday or if there is a festival on the morrow, the other deacons stand for the "gibra leilit" or night service and chant the "Sa'ātāt" or Book of Hours serving till the dawn.

8. The granting of the authority of Peter, which is the priesthood, is on certain days according to the will of Abbātāchin. But, if the letter is outside the country,<sup>1</sup> a deacon may wait in vain and return unblest. If Abbātāchin is at Addis Ababa, the blessing may be given on the feast day of Egziavheir or of the Redeemer of the World or of Mary or on Sunday.

9. If a priest does wrong in a matter concerning his authority, the Álaqa will judge him in the House of Mystery with the shutters drawn, lest the deacons and dābtarās hear, and may imprison him or send him to Our Father to be judged. But, if he does wrong as other men, the Governor will punish him or may inform Our Father by letter.

10. For a church two priests and five deacons suffice, but a big Dabir may have a Sacristan, a Head named the Álaqā, seven priests, twelve deacons, a Left Master, a Right Master, a Chamberlain, and a Head Deacon together with many dābtarās.

11. The Álaqā in a Dabir is the Head and may be a priest or a monk or a dābtarā. There is not always a Guide Master for the singing and the same man may be both Álaqā and Mari<sup>2</sup> Gieitā.

12. A Mammir is a learned man and a teacher—one who professes all knowledge—and may be a priest or a

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* if there is no Metropolitan.

<sup>2</sup> *vb.* 60.

monk or a *dábtarā* or a layman. Jesus was called a *Mammir*, for He was pure and made pure the Apostles. But the *Āfa Mammir* is the officer of *Abbātāchin*, who is set in each province to guard the justice of Our Father, and he is the *Liqa Kāhenāt* or Chief of the Ecclesiastics, to whom in some provinces each ecclesiastic will pay three dollars a year as the tribute of *Abbātāchin*. For if the church is a *Gaṭar* and has not been made a *Dabir*, the judgment lies with the *Āfa Mammir*, who is greatly honoured and will sit side by side with the Governor. When a man dies, the Confessor will take his bed and the hide and the horn cup, but the clothes they will sell, the Confessor taking one share and the *Āfa Mammir* two shares; yet the *barnós* or poncho will be left, unless the kin give it. Also in a *Gaṭar* there may be a Guide Master to direct, and he will be appointed and dismissed by the *Āfa Mammir*. But a *Dabir* has been given by *Abbātāchin* to the Governor, nor does the *Āfa Mammir* enter into the judgments, and therefore the Confessor will divide the price of a dead man's clothes with the *Ālaqā*. Also, when priests and deacons quarrel, he who is defeated will pay the fees to the *Ālaqā*, who will also take one fifth of monies given to the priests.

13. The *Aggāfāri* is the Chamberlain and is appointed by the *Ālaqā* and not by the *Gabaz*. Yet the Sacristan may order the Chamberlain, who in his turn will order the priests and deacons, and if one is lacking in his work, the Chamberlain will receive from him the "*dāfan*," which is the fine for failure of service.

14. The *Gabaz* is the Sacristan—the guardian of the goods of the *tābót*, such as stuffs, incense, and tapers—all that men vow he will collect and store. For, if a wife lacks a child, she may vow to Mary, saying, "If thou

dost give me a child, I will cause to enter into thy store two dollars worth of chintz (or one dollar's worth of incense)." And of all the possessions that are brought into the enclosure nothing may go forth—not even a needle—without the will of the Gabaz ; for all these things are gizzit by order of Abbātāchin. He who makes the office of Gabaz—the Gibzinnā—is the maintainer of the tābót, who is the Governor or some officer. When a tābót has been obtained, the Gabaz, if he is a priest, may carry it himself to Addis Ababa to obtain the blessing of Abbūn, or if he is not a priest, he will find one and send him up—but not alone, for it is the rule that there be two priests and three deacons with the tābót and many guards of the patron. When men meet the tābót upon the road they will know from afar, for there will be the sign—an umbrella carried open by the priest, who will wear his black silk cloak. Also there will be a deacon with a small bell, which will warn men of their approach. So every man who is a Christian will bow low and kiss the ground, making salutation to the tābót. If the Sacristan dies, his son will succeed, and if the boy be very young, a priest will be appointed as his tutor, or the kin will choose a dābtarā or monk.

15. Along the western wall of the Choir they will stand thus, beginning from the right or south—the Right Master, the Guide Master, the *Álaqā*, the *Ré'isa Dabir*, and the Left Master—while the dābtarās will stand in front. Both the Right and Left Masters are appointed by the *Álaqā*, and may be priests or dābtarās, or either may be a "Liq" who is learned. If the dābtarās err in their work, they may compel them to call a surety. The *Álaqā* (if he is also the Guide Master) will know the *Diggwā* (Hymn Book) with the *Tsōma Diggwā*, the

Me'eráf (Chants), the Mawāse't (Anthems), and the Zimmārei (Chants) and he will teach those who are ignorant of them. The Ré'isa Dabir is a high officer, and in the assembly will sit with the Álaqā to adjust disputes ; but he will not share the judgment fees. When his turn comes, he will compose a hymn. Also there may be a Liqa Tabavt who will receive the third of the judgment fees.

16. The Álaqā himself, being the Guide Master, will know the qalam perfectly, and after he has chanted the others receive from him. Also the Left and Right Masters alternately bring their part to an end according to the qalam and the dābtarās pick them up responding. As each leads, the dābtarās take them up by swinging their crutches.

17. The qiniei is a song in praise of Our Lord or Our Lady or of the Malā'ekt, such as Michael and Rūfāeil, or of the Martyrs, such as George and Mercury, or of the Saints, such as Gabra Manfas Qiddūs and Abbūn Takla Háimenot. It is the dābtarās who sing one in turn according to the order of the Álaqā, and each must ponder inventing a new theme, for it is not found in books. If a dābtarā repeats an old qiniei, he will be called a thief and the others will despise him as ignorant. When he sings, the qiniei lasts but a short time, while all stand upright and take him up at the end. So on the Birthday of John the Baptist, which is on July 7th, a clever man will compose a song in praise of St. John and of the blessings of rain. For the qiniei is in the Gi'iz language, and if the others do not understand it, he will explain it afterwards in Amharic ; nor will they draw the shamma over the mouth in derision, but will extol him as one who is powerful and a master of the giṭim or rhythm. And



he may write the words on paper and carry them to the Governor and receive a reward.

18. The *aqqābīt* is a nun or a woman who is the servant of the church. It is she who cleanses the wheat from dirt and dust and droppings of mice and grinds it with care. Then she gives the flour to the deacon to bake for the Communion.

19. The *Aklil* is the Crown that is worn by those married with the Communion. At certain festivals—Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, *Hidār Māryām*, and *Ṭirr Māryām* (which is *Astārio Māryām*)—it is brought forth from the store, but, save at the Epiphany, *Hidār Māryām*, and *Astārio Māryām*, it goes not outside the church.

20. The "*gaṭsa bāarakat*" is the "face blessing" and is the money of *Abbātāchin*, which in a *Gaṭar* the *Aggāfāri* will collect yearly for the *Āfa Mammir* from the Ecclesiastics. So, too, he who has a conscience will give to his Confessor yearly the *gaṭsa bāarakat*, which may be the roast grain of the fast.

21. A deacon or priest may not place a ring upon his finger nor may he wear a big neck-cord with a scroll—only the small neck-cord with a tiny wooden cross upon it. But he may carry in his hand a fly-switch made from the tail of the Colobus monkey or horse or cow.

22. His head is shaved, and on it he wears a small *qōb* or cap under his turban. The *qātsala* is the head covering of muslin which is worn by the priests at the Mass, but not by a deacon, and is kept upon the Altar—one for each priest.

23. The vestments belong to the *tābót*. On a Sunday or for a burial the deacon will wear a shirt of *Abdullah Kāni* or of *šūti* reaching down to his heels. The Sacristan will point out to each his clothes for the Mass, when the

box is opened, nor may the deacon touch those of a priest. Also a deacon will don a black mantle of stuff which resembles silk or, if there is no mantle, he may sew up šūti and wear it like a shamma. His drawers also will be of šūti. But on a festival he will wear a mantle with gold thread over his shirt of Abdullah Kāni.

24. The priest will dress like the deacon, but the kabbā warq will have a ǧirā or tassel of gold "ṭabṭāb" hanging behind the neck and the gold "ṭabṭāb" sewn upon his mantle is broader than that of the deacon. If it is found, on days of festival he may wear a "Kabbā lanqā," which is a "lamd" or decorated mantle of silk and inside has warqa zabo of many colours—embroidered silk brocade bought from abroad. This he will wear at Christmas, the Epiphany, and Easter, and when the tābôt revolves round the church. The kabbā or mantle of the priest may be green sewn over with gold thread and has over it the "lanqā" which has five tails and is of a dark-red colour. Also the maggwonātsáfia, which covers the tābôt, is brocade sewn upon chintz and has at the top a band of green silk four fingers in breadth. The thread seen upon it is of silver in patterns like the trefoil.

25. The Qomos is one unmarried and blameless, who has received at the same time from Abbātāchin the office of deacon, priest, monk, and qomos. He it is who grants the qōb to monks and nuns, like the Êċagei (who is the head of the monks) and Abbātāchin himself. His dress is different to that of a priest, for his shirt is black and he may wear boots, while inside his turban is placed a black cloth. So one who desires to become a monk will go to the Qomos and receive the qōb after paying one dollar. When a new tābôt is brought into a place or if a tābôt returns from Addis Ababa re-sanctified, the Qomos

will come to bless it and instal it. For a priest may become diseased, or a dog may have entered the Sanctuary, or a thief may have torn the coverings from the Altar ; thus the tābót is contaminated and must be carried back to the Pāpās at Addis Ababa. When it returns re-blessed, the Qomos will anoint it with the Holy Chrism, and if he lives far off they will send mules to bring him with honour and acclamation.

26. The nun is one who knows her soul, having grown old, and being obliterated for God, rejects the things of the flesh and works only the work of her soul ; but she knows not the mysteries like the priest. Her qōb she receives from the Qomos, and at night wears the leather " saq " girded round her inside the clothes. This saq is a broad leathern strap like a cartridge belt, and is worn to chafe the skin and destroy the ease, but by day it is girt over the shirt. If leather is not found, it may be fashioned from palm fibre. Holding her staff and fly whisk in her hand she haunts the Door of God, but, being dead to the world, will hold her own Commemoration on the fortieth day or after six months or a year, begging the money from the generous. Also, like other good women, she will bake on Sundays (having begged the flour) the tiny bread named tasfā to distribute among the poor and those who come to kiss the church. This she will give, saying, according to the tābót, " For the sake of Mary ! For the sake of Michael ! For the sake of Sanvat ! "

27. A monk, if he is a layman, is not meet for the office of Confessor, but will serve the church, breaking wood and shaking rugs like the anṭāfi.<sup>1</sup> He may have been an unmarried deacon or a deacon whose wife is dead, or he may be one who has received the priesthood and may

<sup>1</sup> vb. 368.

perform the Mass with other priests. An old man, who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!" and will beg the Qomos to make him a son of the qōb, and the Qomos, sewing it up, will give it to him with a blessing.

28. The bāhtāwi is not a monk, but is a hermit who lives apart from men. Nor has he the authority of the priest, for, if he goes to Abbātāchin and begs him, Abbūn will refuse him, saying, "Marry a lawful wife or become a monk! Without reason I will not give thee the authority!" For the hermit is the messenger of God, and at times will appear by night to cry aloud, "A mighty tribulation is coming upon you! Repent!" and will disappear like a puff of smoke. He may be known by his hair, which is uncut and shaggy with butter rubbed upon it. At night he may sleep inside a tomb-hut or, having built a tiny hut, will haunt the church. If God shows him aught in a dream, he will cry it aloud to an officer, saying, "Such-and-such a dream have I seen! Take heed and give alms to the poor and set prisoners free!"

29. A dābtarā is a scribe who will have studied from his boyhood in the house of some Ālaqā, having learnt the Gi'iz tongue; for all the Mass and holy books are written in Gi'iz, and also the hymns. Nor does every priest know Gi'iz. But a dābtarā is not a priest, and will remain outside in the Choir, striking the drum and sistrum and clapping his hands and singing the qinie in honour of the tābót. A great church may have fifty dābtarās, who receive their food from the Head, and these may wander from one tābót to another.

30. Many a dābtarā, taking his rifle, will go to hunt in

the plains. Some, wandering here and there in the towns, will write cunning spells for the profane. Also one may cajole a woman, and if the husband strike his wife, saying, "Thou hast been to the house of the *dábtarā*," that *dábtarā* may give her a medicine, and if the husband takes his rifle to kill the *dábtarā*, it will not fire, or if it fires, the bullet will miss; or, if it is a spear, the point will not pierce the *dábtarā*. Also, if the husband goes to the assembly to accuse him, it is not possible for him to utter words, for the *dábtarā* will gaze at him and cause his eye to remain fixed and his mouth to be silent. One *dábtarā* there was who, being imprisoned in chains, did but blow upon them "uf! uf!" and they were loosened. This he did for other prisoners, and all vanished together.

31. A *dábtarā* who is a worker of spells may also open and inspect the book for an officer and say, "On such-and-such a day go not forth from home or thou wilt fall ill!" Or he will say, "If thou art going far, go forth, but return after a little way and, having passed the night, start once more and let that day be a full day's journey! So wilt thou return in safety." Such counsel is called a *nigirt*<sup>1</sup> or pronouncement. Also, if an officer arrives newly advanced to office, he will advise him, saying, "Abandon the old entrance to the house and, making another door, enter by it!" For a man or woman he may open the book, and seeing the good and evil, will advise them thus, "Buy a sheep with such-and-such a marking! Slaughter it on such-and-such a day!" Also he will write these words on parchment of goat's skin, "This is medicine for the evil eye" or "for wounds" or "for rheumatism." So they will give him three dollars or one dollar or half a dollar, and, taking that writing,

<sup>1</sup> vb. 352.

will sew it up in bāhr arab or in "filāi" and will fasten it round their necks.

32. An evil sorcerer may go to some river to evoke Satan to question him on behalf of another. So, having learnt what Satan has to teach, he will dig up roots that are deadly and maddening and will prepare the desired medicine. But this kind of dābtarā, if he is taken in the working of plots against the Throne, will have his leg and his hand cut off; therefore he will wander round working in secret.

## CHAPTER XV

### CHURCH LAND

1. Where the "qalād" or rope has been thrown for the measurement of land and it has been entered in the register, a man may hold his land for the support of a priest or deacon who serves by the week. So he will pay to the "sammonaññā" twelve dollars yearly and give him twelve dāullās<sup>1</sup> of grain and a thick shamma. Of the grain half will be millet and the rest according to the land; also, if he is rich, he will give a cow with calf, or one in calf. Also he will pay tithes to the Government. If he quarrels with the priest, the priest may leave him, but will return the cow; and the landholder, fearing lest the Sacristan inflict the "addāfāñ" or fine for neglect of service, will plead softly with another priest that he serve him. For the priest goes not daily to the church, but only in his turn. If there are five weekly officiants, the shrine should have ten gāššās<sup>2</sup> of land, but a great Dabir will need thirty or fifty gāššās.

2. One who holds land by the diaconate tenure will pay to the deacon some fifteen or sixteen dollars a year. But his parents will have fed him till he became a deacon. If the boy is stupid or idle, he may be ejected and the land-holder must seek another deacon. If the deacon commits a fault by entering upon his service when unclear from sight of the koso, the Sacristan will take

<sup>1</sup> 1 dāullā=2 mādigga=20 qunnā=roughly 20 washbasins full.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. "shield." Cf. p. 187.

me from the lad and not from the owner of the

So too the owner will give only grain and money to a priest, who must himself pay a fine of two or three dollars if he is convicted of having forgotten a Mass.

Also there is land which a *dábtarā* will hold. Such a priest will recite the *Sa'ātāt* or Hours of the Night at certain times, or in Lent will sing the hymns or will choose a *qíniei* in his turn, or will recite the *Tsōma vā* and accompany with the crutch. Or his land may be the "Hours of the Day" and at the Fast of Abbiy of the Assumption he will recite these in the church.

He may be a priest and a "*qwāmi*"<sup>1</sup>—one who stands before the altar and performs the "*Gibra Leilit*" at a night service.

The Sacristan will have his serfs like an officer, even if the "*qalād*" or rope has been thrown to measure the land.

In districts where no rope has been thrown both priests and deacons will have their serfs for their support, and there cannot be "weekly service" land till the rope has been cast. So they may receive from each serf yearly four dollars and three *dāullās* of grain, and the priest with two dollars for honey. Also five tamuns of land a year—at Christmas, Easter, and the Festival of the Cross. Thus from five to twelve serfs will suffice.

If the thrower of the rope has passed three times for measurement, the landowner may be written in the church register as a strewer of grass or of rushes in the church. The poor are fortunate. To each shrine there may be from six to twenty of such strewers, and each Sunday in turn two of them will take or send a load of reeds or of grass. Or if there have been made a "*qarāfi*"<sup>2</sup> or peeler of wood by an officer of the rope, and he must send weekly a load of wood for the kindling in the Sacristy. Whether

<sup>1</sup> vb. 251.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 233



it is grass or wood, each load is counted by the *gāššā*, and the owner of three *gāššās* will send three loads.

6. If the thatch of the church leaks, the *Álaqā* will complain to the Governor, who will speak with the *Shambals*, of whom there may be more than twenty in a province. And they will bring aid. If the church is about to fall, the *Sacristan* will speak with an officer who will tell the Governor, who will order all to work—even the men of the *Nagādrās*, the Head of the Customs. And the *Nagādrās* in his quarter will at eve cause the “*liflif*” to be made, crying, “To-morrow let each bring a load of grass to the church and ten rolls of binding fibre! Whoever fails of those in the market shall be turned out from his place and the fine will be fifteen dollars!” Also, each officer will bring his own *çifrā* or band of soldiers.

7. In time of war there are certain landholders who must accompany the shrine which they serve. When *Jān Hoi* went forth against the Italians, there went with him the *tābót* of *Dambaro Māryām*, which is near *Ankōbar*, and that of *Bar Gibbi Gīyorgīs*, which is in *Yifrātā*. For it was their turn, and if another war arises, *Addis Alam Māryām* and *Arāda Gīyorgīs* will go.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MĀHABBAR OR PRIVATE COMMUNION

1. They say that of old Jesus Christ used to drink the Communion with eleven men. At that time he was poor, and by reason of his poverty his seat was near the door and the *ṭuwā* or earthen cup from which he drank had a broken mouth. From among the company one named *Mūsei* was appointed officer, and to the rest gave fair unbroken *ṭuwās*, but to God the broken one. So Jesus in his poverty frequented the houses of the others, who pondered saying in their hearts, "This man is poor and homeless. How may he give us to eat and drink?" But, when his day came, he called *Mūsei* and the others, and *Mūsei* went laughing. As they entered, a fragrant smell met their nostrils and they saw rushes surpassing their own spread upon the floor. And Jesus brought near for them raisin wine and the *Hibista Hannā*, and *Mūsei* poured out the drink serving them, but feared to present to God drink in a broken vessel; so he served it in a perfect *ṭuwā*. But Jesus said to him, "Nay! This is not mine. Let the *ṭuwā* bear witness!" And when they set down all the cups, that broken cup of *Egziavheir* went hopping across the room and rested in front of God, bearing witness for him. Thereafter God taught them and rising up from their midst was hidden from them.

2. From that time did the *Mābbar*<sup>1</sup> begin to be drunk

<sup>1</sup> Popular contraction of *Māhabbar* vb 380

and called by its name. But that Mūsei on his death was cast into a pit, because he had worked evil, and till to-day men passing near his grave do throw a stone within ; yet is it still unfilled. The place and country of his death we know not, though some say that it is Jerusalem. Thus it is that even now we fear to be the Mūsei or President, who after serving drink and food will give alms to the poor. And there are two Mūseis—one the chief Mūsei and the other the dālgā Musei, for they are as a pair of oxen at the plough. The chief Mūsei is chosen by lot and, if he is absent on some pressing need, the second Mūsei will tend the members.

3. A Mābbar may begin with play and a bet. Of two men sitting and chatting together the one may arise and cry, "Thou didst say that thou wouldst give me such-and-such a thing, but hast denied the gift." Then the other will deny it, and the first will cry, "That thou didst so say to me I will give a jar of mead." And the adversary will reply, "Enter the bet !" So a third man coming will judge the matter, and he who is defeated will buy the drink, which they will drink together. And a fourth man may come and join them and they will say to him, "Thou hast drunk of a bet. Pay us the price !" and he will reply, "Since thus you say, come, let us begin a Mābbar !" Afterwards they will choose with care other men of prudent age—those who work not evil, whose nature is beauteous and calm, who anger not swiftly—till the twelve be filled. For this is the number of custom, though thirty and forty men may join together dividing up their numbers afterwards.

4. A great man may hold one Mābbar yearly or twice or thrice a month. Even if there are more than twelve, the cost is not great, since the feast is by turn. That of

Sanvat or Sānvatei may be held weekly or monthly, and is drunk on the day of some tābót—on the day of the Saint to whom the day is holy. Those who drink the Mābbar of Sānvatei will be men of knowledge, and the host with them will spread a hide upon the floor to sleep. And arising at cock-crow they will light the fire of Sanvat and opening the door will sit supplicating God and the Sabbath, saying, "Give me life and fortune and ward off illness from me!" Then they go to the church and, meeting the others, kiss the door or the earth before it and hear the Mass, those of them who are learned reciting prayers and drawing out their Psalter. But such who can are few. After Mass they assemble to go to the hut where their Mābbar is to be.

5. But the host, returning quickly before them, will spread grass upon the floor, for he will have bought a bundle in the market for a tamun. A great man will cause carpets to be spread before their coming. On Saturday the wife of the host will have cooked upon the iron griddle—the round hollow plate—bread for the feast and will have made sauce and roasted grain, and baked the wheaten loaf for the morrow. But her labour is not heavy, for the feast is by turn. When the Mābbar was begun and a tābót was chosen, they cut sticks wherewith to draw lots, and having marked the "itā" they called upon another man to come and draw for them. This he did, raising the sticks above his head between his palms, and after twirling them backwards and forwards he drew out one and said, "Let the possessor of this stick produce the first Mābbar." And so for the second and third and all in succession.

6. If a member of a Mābbar has some urgent business and is unable to give it in his turn, he will beg another

to be his substitute and will take his turn at another time.

7. When all are assembled, they await the Confessor, who comes with his Cross and fly-whisk and Holy Water to recite prayers and asperse the house while all stand upright. In Shoa he may come with a deacon. The host will stand in the middle supporting with one hand upon his head the dish of sanctified food which is called the *ṭādiq* and holding the *ṭabal* in his left. In this *ṭādiq* may be roasted grain or a wheaten loaf or barley bread or even bread of millet, though wheat were better, since it is the chief grain. Whatever it be, it will rest in this *mosob* or basket, just as the *tābót* of a church rests in a *mósoba warq*. The *ṭabal* is not the Holy Water of the church, and is beer inside a *ṭuwā* of clay, called a *ṭuwā* like the chalice of the Communion. Or, if there be no *ṭuwā*, it may be in a horn cup.

8. These the host will set upon the ground for the blessing of the priest, who will say, "Qiddūs Sillāsioč yibārku! May the Holy Trinities bless!" passing his Cross around and over them to the four quarters. If the wheaten loaf is one only, the Confessor will make the "siso" dividing it into two parts of which the company will take half, the poor one quarter, and the *burākei* or benediction one quarter. But in Shoa there will be two loaves of wheat, one of which is divided into three portions, two for the company and one part for the poor, which is the holy third; the other is divided in two, of which one part is for the banqueters. But the other half is again broken into two, of which one half the *Mūsei* will give to the mistress of the house "la-burākei" for a blessing to her and her neighbours who will eat it together. The other half the *Mūsei* gives to the *bāla*

sāmmint—the master of the week whose turn it will be to give the feast after eight days. A small portion of the broken bread the priest will keep back for himself after returning the basket to the Mūsei.

9. After the adjusting of their togas they stand for the blessing, and afterwards each will say, "Absolve me, my Father!" and having received the absolution each will sit in turn; but the Mūsei, raising up the mosob and tuwā, will pass them round to all. Afterwards the chief Mūsei will sit himself, ordering the dālgā Mūsei to serve the food and drink which the master has handed over for the Mābbar. So they sit eating and drinking and, if it is a Sunday Mābbar, will not scatter to their homes till the tenth hour towards eve; but, if it is a monthly Mābbar, as that of Mary or Michael or Gabriel, or George, they may sit all that day from the third hour, and on the morning of the next day will partake of another meal before separating. Yet, if there is work or urgent need, they will not assemble before the afternoon of the day of the tābót.

10. At the end the Mūseis stand up and the chief Mūsei takes two horn cups filled with beer and not with hydromel, for even water were better than hydromel. Then he cries, "Who art thou, the lord of the week! May God cause thee to yoke with eighteen!" And he whose turn it will be for the next Mābbar will adjust his shamma and cry, "I am the bāla sāmmint! If God see for me, if he see for you, I will await you, having strewn rushes and drawn water. I am the friend of Mary (Sanvat, etc.)!" and will bow his head to the ground, while the priest makes the benediction over him. Then he tastes the drink and seats himself. After that the Mūsei cries to him whose turn is second, "Who art

thou, lord of two (weeks)? May God cause thee to yoke with twelve!" and he also will reply and taste and sit. So, too, to him whose turn is third the Mūsei will say, "Who art thou, lord of three (weeks)? May God cause thee to yoke with thirteen!" and he too will reply, "I am the lord of three!" These first three will taste of the horn, but not the fourth, to whom the Mūsei will say, "Miss not thy house!" meaning that he should take care for it. Nor will this fourth receive the benediction like the other three.

11. Then the householder with his wife will stand forth with the Mūseis, and the chief Mūsei, still holding the horns, will speak on their behalf, the dālgā Mūsci being silent. And he will say to the priest and all, "Brethren, if I have distinguished between small and great or, if I have chosen between the horns, pardon me for Sanvat's sake! If my eye erred against me, if my eye showed favour, pardon me, my brethren! Abbūna za ba-samāiyāt! Our Father which art in the Heavens! If the beer was thin for you, if the wheaten loaf was burnt, if the bread and sauce were scanty, pardon me, my brethren, for Sanvat, for Michael!" And they will prostrate themselves and the others will reply, "*The beer was not thin, the grain was unscorched, the bread and sauce abounded.* May Sanvat bring you the months! May he not part us, and may he cause you to live long and give you wealth of years!" So they bless the Mūseis and hosts, and the priest will say, "The bread was not scorched, neither was the hibista hannā<sup>1</sup> or beer thin, the wine was strong, thy eye erred not nor did thy hand show favour. Those who did wrong knowingly in their daring, those who did wrong ignorantly in error—may God absolve their sin! Abbūna za ba-samāiyāt,"

<sup>1</sup> Bread of joy?

and all will prostrate themselves, murmuring, " Amiein ! " And the banqueters will say, " Thou didst not choose between the cups, nor didst thou distinguish great and small, nor didst thou show favour with thy hand. God pardon thee ! Michael raise thee up with honour ! " Before they scatter, the priest will bless them all, saying, " Ye are the young shoots of one field, the milk of one cow ! May he make you that ye meet not in evil, in sin, in perjury ! " and to each, " My son, God absolve thee ! Take heed to guard thy soul ! " and to the bāla sām̄mint, " May the Redeemer of the World raise thee up on the honoured Resurrection ! "

12. All on entering save the priest had kissed the gač, which is the gān or jar of the Mābbar. This may have stood a week full against the wall clothed with a cloth and bound at the neck with a white taper. Each as he entered kissed it, saying, " Pray, my Master, Holy Michael, make me to arrive from month to month, from year to year ! " In Shoa the jar will, on the next day, be sent with the țuwā and burākei to the house of the next host, but on the Marches it may be used for any work and each has his own. One jar will contain enough beer for twenty țuwās, and it is the host who uncovers the țuwā, and filling it from the jar gives it to the Mūsei, who gives to all by the hand of the dalgā Mūsei. For this țuwā has tied round its neck the thread of the weft, like the neck-cord, nor may it be used for other work. When emptied at the Mābbar, it is again filled and covered with a piece of stuff and a servant will bear it to the next host, whose wife and neighbours will drink it up and lay it aside empty—but covered—till the Mābbar arrive again. This țuwā is blessed once only by the priest at the time of the forming of the Mābbar, and the stuff in



which it is shrouded may be white, being one that has been vowed. For one of the banqueters may have prayed to Michael, saying, "My Master, Michael, if thou wilt grant me a son, I will vow to thee a piece of cloth." So also in a cloth the *burākei* of wheaten loaf, which is called the "*maṭṭubbiš*," is sent to the wife of the next host, that she may eat of it with her friends. And this is the "*kurmān*" or quarter of one loaf out of the two loaves.

13. The *Mūsei* is a judge and, if a dispute arises as to the division of the wheaten loaf, it is he who says, "Give some to the poor!" If the *Mūsei* is called away so that he cannot be present, he will order the *dālgā Mūsei* to act in his stead, and the others will summon some poor man to serve them; or he may tell his brother or even his son or his servant.

14. In Shoa a woman may not share the *Mābbar* with men, but in the Marches women will drink with the males, nor is it held to be unseemly and like a spoiling of the Eucharist. So she will join herself to a company of men, saying, "My brothers, if I die, ye must bury me; if I am straitened for silver, ye must be my surety." Thus she will become their sister, and therefore husband and wife may not drink from the same *Mābbar*, for it makes them brother and sister. But in Shoa women will form a *Mābbar* from women alone. Nor may a woman marry one of her co-banqueters, nor may a man marry the wife of a co-banqueter, if he should die, just as he may not marry the daughter of his Confessor. So too a woman may not marry her *Mizei* nor may her child marry the child of her *Mizei*.<sup>1</sup>

15. When *Jān Hoi*<sup>2</sup> was a member of a *Mābbar* with others, one of his co-drinkers offended him. So he put

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor Menilik.

forth that man into the midst of the public assembly, crying, "Judge ye this case for me! This man, being my co-banqueter and servant, I raised to office and honoured; yet entering into my Government and Bed he has wronged me thus. Ye therefore must judge between us." And his tābóts were the Redeemer of the World and Mary. Also once did he imprison an officer, one of his co-banqueters, and the others, rising up and girding round their shammas cried, "Master, we pray you to set him free," but he would not. Then they cried out, "Since ye will not fulfil this our will, retire from our Mābbar!" Thus did they frighten the Nigús, who released the man.

16. It were good and excellent that a great man should hold his Mābbar on the Sabbath for the sake of Sanvat. So at dawn these great men going to the church will hear the Mass and will stand till the Communion has been given to others. Then they will retire to a spacious grave that has been roofed over and there they will eat and drink on the rush-strewn floor and give alms to the poor; but women may not come.

17. If a debt fall upon a man suddenly and his creditors come to seize him on the day of the Mābbar, his other co-banqueters will gather together and say, "Brethren, God has brought this upon us. What may we do? Let some one among us become his surety." So one will be his bond and release his hand and they will return to finish their Mābbar. Afterwards all will take counsel together, saying, "Let us pay the silver, each according to his power, and save our brother from debt." So one will give five dollars and another six dollars, and collecting the sum they will pay the creditor; for the debtor was a brother of the ʔuwāt.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another form of ʔuwāt.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PRIVATE COMMUNION. (b) THE ZIKIRT

1. This zikirt<sup>1</sup> is a reminder, and may be held many times in the month or once in the year; nor is it a Mābbar, for a man who trusts in many tābôts or in one only will give his zikirt to the tābôt once a month himself. But the Mābbar is by turn and needs more money, though it arrive but once in half a year or in ten months or a year. The feast of the zikirt is cheaper, and one man, even if he is humble, may commemorate three or five tābôts monthly, choosing Emmanuel or Gabriel or Jesus or Sanvat or the Redeemer of the World or Michael or Mary or George or Abbo<sup>2</sup> or Abu Takla Hāimanot or any other. And the Confessor, being a man's witness, will call him, saying, "Pray come! Commemorate for me the ṭabal and ṭādiq!" For a man may not live without constant prayer, and every man who is a Christian will say to himself before dinner and supper, "May the Three Trinities bless it! May God bless the table!"

2. For the day of the tābôt a man will prepare the drink and food, calling the Confessor. If on that day a neighbour invites him, crying, "Come! Let us go to the market to buy a shirt or drawers!" he will reply, "Wait! I have not yet commemorated. Having done so I will come!" And, when the priest arrives, the host may call his neighbours—two or ten as they are found

<sup>1</sup> vb. 537. Cf. p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Gabra Manfas Qiddūs (Slave of the Holy Spirit).

-crying, "Come! Taste of the *ṭabal* and *ṭādiq*!" So, having commemorated, they depart quickly, each to his work. If the *tābôt* be *Sanvat*, first they will go to the church and after the Mass will return for the *zikirt*. And, if the Confessor cannot come, he will send a deacon or a *dábtarā* to break the bread.

3. The *tābôt* may have appeared to a man in a dream or he may have made a vow, "My Master, if thou hast caused this event to arrive, I will give thee a monthly *ṭabal* and *ṭādiq*!" So, if that desire is fulfilled, he will commemorate that *tābôt*.

4. A traveller on the road buying a little beer with a *tamun* will prepare one piece of bread and call upon his friends to taste, for many need not gather together as at a *Mābbar*. But in a house a man will have baked a small loaf which is the *ṭādiq*, which the priest will break into pieces, afterwards giving them to drink of the *ṭabal* which is beer. But there is no *sīso* nor *burākei* for the women, as at the *Mābbar*. For the *zikirt* pieces of bread may be baked doubled together, which is called the *annabābiro*<sup>1</sup>; nor is it thick and large like the wheaten loaf of the *Mābbar*, which suffices for all who come to taste. The custom is that there be three pieces three-fold, of which the first and second are baked separately, and then the first is placed underneath with the third still unbaked in the middle and the second over all; so are the three placed all in one upon the griddle. Or the first is baked thrice and the second twice, and they are folded upon each other after the first baking. Also wheat were best for the bread, but this may be from barley or *dāgussā* or maize or millet. If a man has no wife or slave, he may even buy it in the market. If

<sup>1</sup> vb. 338.

there is no beer for the ṭabal, pure water will suffice or linseed ; for a wayfarer may not easily come upon beer. The linseed being roasted on the griddle is pounded and steeped in hot water, and is drunk like tea. But, if the annabábiro had been for ordinary food, butter and ground onions would have been smeared on the top.

5. Women and children do not share in the zikirt, unless the children are male and of full understanding. When all are assembled, the householder will stand in the middle, holding the bread basket on his head or shoulder with his left hand and having in his right the horn cup. So he will stand while the Confessor blesses them or some lettered friend who knows a prayer will give a blessing or even the host himself, if he is alone and knows the words.

6. A rich man who can prepare a great feast will hold the yearly feast of remembrance on the day of Michael which is the 12th day of Sániei, or on Hidár Māryām or on Astário Māryām or on Hidár Ṭsiyón.<sup>1</sup> This is named the zikir or amat tazkár—commemoration of the year. Thus he will not toil monthly and will give freely of food and drink but once in the year. So he will buy a sheep or flesh in the market and will pray his Confessor to call the priests. But this is not the Mūtān Tazkár, which is the Commemoration of the Dead. Also he will prepare bounteously, for there will be a division of the wheaten loaf and a blessed portion.

7. If the Confessor refuses or forgets to come, he may be made to pay a kāsā in compensation. For the rich man may accuse him before the Álaqā, and the Álaqā may send that Confessor under guard up to Shoa to Abbātāchin. For the giver of the feast may cry to the Álaqā,

<sup>1</sup> Sion.

" Having prepared a feast I asked him to come to the zikir of Mary and divide the alms for me ; but he failed, and caused my feast to rot and the poor to scatter. Let us make him find a surety, for he has wronged me thus. By the word of Abbātāchin be punished ! " Then the Ālaqā may cause them to make the 80 bond and send them to Addis Ababa, where Our Father will speak with that priest as with a woman and ask him, " Anči, didst thou fail ? " and, if he confesses, Abbātāchin will cry, " I have taken thy siltān from thee ! Wei ! Hij ! Be gone ! " and to the accuser he will say, " And thou, woman, seek out another Níssihā Abbāt and keep him ! " For Jān Hoi and Abbātāchin alone when angry may address a man in the feminine as a woman. Which custom they learned from Atei Teiwodros.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in praise may any man say of another, " This youth is excellent and clever," using the feminine.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Theodore.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 166.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### RECONCILIATION

1. A fool will not listen to a friend, nor will he understand when others sit to explain to him some matter with wise words. Also two men may ask an ignorant friend to reconcile them, but he will question them casually and will repeat his questions without examining the affair up and down. So his reconciliation will soon be destroyed and they must seek a wiser man. Hence they say, "Let him who cannot profit refrain from trade; let him who has no patience refrain from judgment." For the wise man speaks in similes and proverbs, separating the good from the bad, so that all praise him as he knits together the issues. After the two are reconciled, they may say, "From necessity we entered into kinship from the forest into the road, and, having produced a friendly judge, we were reconciled, and cleansed ourselves."

2. Also they say, "If it burns me, with my spoon; if it burns me not, with my hand." For two men may quarrel and the elders will wish to reconcile them. But the one may cry, "He reviled me greatly, and what matters to me this reconciliation? Yet, if ye judge fairly and give me a recompense, we will finish here; but, if ye do me injustice, I will go afterwards to the judge." For if the porridge is hot to the hand, it is eaten with a spoon; if it is cool, it is eaten with the hand.

3. It is a mighty oath if one swears, "Let it become for me my father's flesh, my father's blood!" One man may try to gain favour with another and say to him, "Pray, take this present!" But he, disliking the giver, may refuse, uttering this oath. Or a man in his anger may cry, "This matter may not be adjusted by reconciliation! Twice have I cut my heart and I will not be reconciled with him. Let it be 'irm' for me!" So having sworn he will turn away his head and neck.

4. The reconciler is honoured and there is a saying, "Than the pleader at law the reconciler, than the washer the drier (is better)." Therefore the elders will constrain a man who wishes to compel another to take an oath on the door of the church, for such an oath is not meet for a Christian. After the Mass has been held, there may be no oath, and therefore men will go before the *tābót* comes down from the Sanctuary at the time of the Elevation of the Host, the sign of which is the tinkling of the small bell by the deacon, and if they have delayed the oath commissioner will make them call sureties for another day, unless they are reconciled.

5. A man may quarrel with a relation and sulk for many days, till some friend, whose guardian spirit is near him, cries, "Ára! Are there no elders in your land? Let us, lest men revile us, call together elders!" So on a Sunday or on a day of festival they will call the two and ask of each, "Swear both of you and utter the words, 'Let the elder die! From the order of the elder I will not turn away!'" Then they will separate them and question each in turn apart, and, if they are reconciled, they will kiss the knees of the elders and fix a day for a feast. There, when the elders eat of the raw meat, they will cry, "Raise not up again such an offence!"



Do ye two together with the one knife cut the meat and eat and swear not to deny yourselves the one to the other ! ”

6. If the elders condemn the one to pay a compensation, they may afterwards stand up and supplicate him to whom it should be paid and cry, “ Remit, we pray, what thou wilt—for God two dollars, for the earth two dollars, for the judge whom we elected one dollar, for us elders three dollars ! ” And he will agree, for it is the custom, since the earth is man and clay is man, and this remission is for the honour of the earth, which consumes not silver. Nor will the elders receive the money which is remitted. Afterwards the loser will send an intercessor to beg for more remission and even a priest will go with his Cross to constrain the winner, especially if both are officers and wearers of a shirt of honour.

7. When men take counsel on some weighty matter, they say, “ Let us agree together. The fat let us slaughter, the lean let us send away.” For what is favourable can be finished and a perplexing matter can be left to another day. So too a father and a son may quarrel over money, but the kin will gather together and ask, “ Will ye not say the one to the other, ‘ Let us slaughter the fat and send forth the lean ! ’ Why are ye two as strangers ? ” and will speak in proverbs and reconcile them.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LAW (a)

1. The judgment fee is twenty dollars for the stake of a mule, fifteen dollars for the stake of a horse, and three dollars for the stake of honey. If the man cries, "I give honey," he will receive one dollar, but for the stake of a horse five dollars, and for that of a mule ten dollars. If he desires, a man may stake "pure" honey, or "dark" or "white" honey or a couple of honeys, or a "swift" or "grey" or "dun" horse or a "swift, ambling" mule. Or he may say, "I will give a thousand stones!" or "a thousand lashes" or "a thousand olive trees," for the olive is burnt for its fragrance in the houses of the great. In olden times one would cry, "I give a thousand horses" or "I give my right hand," but Jān Hoi changed the custom after taking counsel with the Āfa Nigūś. The honey, horse, and mule are the chief stakes. So they say, "A bird of prey on a tree, a stake on the edge." For the bird remains on the top and an accuser must abide by the stake that he made when he cried, "I will give . . ." The foolish suitor will desire only to cry, "I will give honey!" without seeking out a path or an issue. Then his kin seated near the judge will say, "Stop! The hare there! The stick here!" For the hare darts to the side and the stick falls elsewhere without striking her. Also "A white pauper brings white silver," for the poor man will plead at law and be defeated. So, having no money for the judgment fee, he will be im-

prisoned and will collect rocks for the Government till he pays the debt.

2. A judge is one who knows the "fird" or verdict—one who has digested talk, who from his boyhood has passed the day near a judge. He will have listened to the interpreter and will have heard the plaintiff cry to the jurors, "Know for me!" and the accused cry to them, "Know not against me!" So day by day knowledge will enter into him and he will know all in his heart as a paper, even if he cannot read or write. Then at length his master will say to himself, "This man may cure his own head and me also, and shows power to judge on my behalf," and will give him office. They say, "If a man exceeds in laughter, his dignity wanes." For a judge, being laughter only, may remain unlistening and afterwards, when one cries, "Know for me!" he having paid no notice will lack an answer, so that men will hold him light and despise him, saying, "He listens not to the procedure." Those too who feared him of old will say, "This man has become light. It is the lessening of the justice of the Nigûs." Thus he will be held a "wāzaññā" or jester, nor will they say of him, "His eye having seen, his mind decides." And a suppliant will not obtain God.

3. The "imāñ"<sup>1</sup> may be a witness who saw the affair or heard the words spoken; or he may be a juror. For, if the matter is important, the judge may call on all those who are listening to become jurors, provided that they are of prudent age, since all men love a suit and many will be there saying, "I will listen to the procedure and accustom myself to the Law." Such a juror is named a "wet imāñ" and also a "nabbāri"<sup>2</sup> because he is freshly

<sup>1</sup> vb. 419.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 338.

come and is at hand. Thus there may be a crowd of jurors. The adversaries may deny the judgment of the witnesses, but the jurors will bear witness to the "kidat"<sup>1</sup> and "imnat"<sup>1</sup>—the contradiction and agreement made by each party in the pleading. If the verdict of the jurors is equally divided, the accuser will cry, "Let it arrive to the judge!" and the judge will say, "The word is So-and-so's!"

4. A man may choose his own jurors, for there is a saying, "A juror and a horse according to one's love!" But the adversary may refuse to accept them, till the judge tires and cries, "Thou hast refused them all! Whence can others be brought? Prefer So-and-so and So-and-so!" and will constrain him. For a juror may be a "firda gamdāi" or cleaver of judgment, who will arise in the assembly and give his judgment falsely, either having received a bribe or being without understanding. So too the "fiqra gamdāi" is the cleaver of love, who quarrels quickly with a friend. Many a juror with no knowledge of the quarrel and without listening to the words of the parties will rise up carelessly saying to himself, "Let it issue from my mouth only!" Hence the saying, "Let a knowing man kill me." For of old in pagan days a soldier might go to war having girt on a blunt sword, which, when it struck, would be slow to kill. So the enemy would cry, "Pray, my master, kill me with a sharp iron!" Thencefore both parties will beware of the "firda gamdil"—the cleaver of judgment—and each will say to himself before the case, "Ai! May a knowing man kill me!"

5. Before a man bears witness, he will cry, "God cause me to save my soul having borne true witness! This I have seen! This I have heard!" He whose witnesses

<sup>1</sup> vbs. 461, 419.

exceed will win, for he is like one who scrapes away a threshing-floor. When an officer swear before his Governor, he will strike the pillow, saying, " My Master's might ! " If there is only one witness who saw or heard, he is sufficient, provided that the other party accepts him ; but if the other party fears false witness and refuses him, the matter must be dismissed or they will be sent to the church to swear. So, too, if the accused counts out for himself two witnesses only, the accuser may cry, " Than a thousand witnesses I have preferred the foot of the shrine—thou thyself ! " and the judge must send them to the church.

6. If the accuser has no witness, he will say to the accused, " Thou thyself (art my witness) ! " and the other will ask, " Who is to die ? " " Let Menilik die ! " Then the accused will cry again, " Swear for me ! " and the accuser will say, " Agreed ! It (thy word) reached me. Let Menilik die ! I will swear ! " and the opponent will add, " And I, let Menilik die, will make thee swear." Which is the 80 bond and the judge will appoint a commissioner with four jurors to go with them to the church on a Sunday or on a day of festival to make the oath.

7. A stupid man or one quick to anger may claim to himself the judgment of a witness and cry, " That witness testified for me ! " Then his adversary will cry, " That he judged in my favour and not in thine I will give honey ! " and they will begin again on this point.

8. If there are two witnesses, both liars, the judge may add himself as a third and cause the accused to accept them perforce. But he may not, if between the accuser and the witness there is any tie such as that of a relation by blood or marriage or god-parentage or adoption or membership of the private Communion, nor if the one

is the Mizei of the other. If the opponent says that he has no other witnesses, the judge will ask him, "Who is to die?" and the accuser will answer, "Menilik is to die!" If then the accused cries, "Those relations of thine the Wambars will not tell me to accept!" the accuser will reply, "That they will tell thee to accept I will give honey!" Which is the "yigabāl"<sup>1</sup> or appeal, nor can a small judge hear the matter further, and they must go to the Wambars.

9. A slave may be a witness, if he has been raised up to Christianity and knows good from evil. So too he may be made to swear in the church. Also he may be a juror. But if his master is the accused, he may not bear witness for him, since the accuser would reject him. If the slave is pagan, the adversary will refuse to hear his testimony, calling him an "azzābi."

10. If the matter is one of "nafs" or killing, the judges will hear the testimony of any one—women or slaves—provided that they saw or heard; and they may be imprisoned till they bring forth the truth.

11. When the jurors have borne witness for the one, he will order his adversary to raise up the stake. And the adversary may cry, "Why am I to raise it up? Let it enter to the word of the judge!" for the word of the judge may overcome that of the jurors. If the judge also bears witness against him, the loser may cry, "By thy command I raised up the stake! I will cause another to hear!" Then he will pay the judgment fee or will allow his surety to pay or to be imprisoned. Also, if two have borne witness for a man and two against him, he may cry, "Let it reach the judge!" or "Let the word of the judge reach me!" So the judge will decide and

<sup>1</sup> vb. 613.

he in whose favour judgment was given will cry to the other to take up the stake.

12. If one accuses another a second time in the same matter, the accused can cry, "I, having defeated thee with my wand set before thy wand and having proved stronger than thee and having shut thee out with an 80 bond—since now thou hast come again like a stranger to accuse me, measure out the 80!" Or he may say, "That the judge might not forget, I spoke and knotted the matter with four witnesses and jurors and judge, lest it should be undone. That I made against thee this agreement I will give honey!" If the other tells him to enter his stake, the witnesses will be counted again. But if he is afraid, he must pay, and the money will be taken by the Government.

13. If the accuser has many witnesses and knows that he will win, he will cry, "That thou didst so and so, I will give an ambling mule!" So his adversary, being poor, will fear to cry, "Enter (thy stake)!" and instead will say, "Thy bar is too strong for me!" Then the accuser will ask, "Let whom die?" and the other will reply, "Let Menilik die!" Therefore the accused will pay only two dollars for the judgment and two tamuns to the interpreter, while the accuser will pay also two tamuns to him and six tamuns "content" money to the clerk.

14. If the witnesses testify against a man, he may cry, "I took up (the stake)!" and having taken up the stake by paying its price he may say to the witnesses, "Will ye swear?" And, when they agree, he will ask, "Who is to die?" and they will answer, "Let Menilik die! We will swear!" and he will say, "Let Menilik die! I will cause you to swear!" So they will call a surety for

this 80 bond and will go to the church. There, after the priest and commissioner have received a dollar each, the witnesses in turn will take hold of the door and close it, saying, "So may Mary close me and my tongue if I bore witness with a lie!" and open it again.

15. If an accuser says, "I have counted four witnesses and have no more," the accused will cry, "Fill up!" and he must count in perforce the accused himself and say, "With thyself I have filled up the five! Accept!" and the other will agree.

16. If the plaintiff had given money before one witness only and the accused deny, saying, "Ale! Thou didst not give it me!" the accuser may begin in front of the judge, "That thou didst receive and that I did give thee, I will give honey!" and may count that witness; for the testimony of one holds firm, since in need he may be made to swear.

17. Before a clerk is appointed, he will take a religious oath in front of his Confessor, swearing to write the truth. A small judge, having spent the day in causing suitors to plead, may afterwards take them to the greater judge, and will "pour forth" his report and state what was their *çibt* or argument. Then the greater judge will ask them if that was their argument and, if they agree, he will say, "Let whom die?" and they will answer, "Let Menilik die!" Or one will deny that those were his pleadings and will accuse the small judge. The small judge should make his report monthly that the clerk may record it in the register; for he will say, "In this matter I decided thus. In this I knew not the Law nor the punishment, nor could I judge without showing the affair to you." For a brigand may have been taken, or a trafficker in slaves. If the clerk writes down wrongly



the words he is guilty of "māzzānnaf,"<sup>1</sup> for his act is crooked.

18. If there is a dispute about an ancient debt, which has already been decided before a judge, the accused may find three witnesses in his favour and the accuser but one witness. Then the accuser may cry, "Let the register bear witness!" But the other will answer, "Since I counted out three witnesses for myself, let the judge bear witness, for the judges will not order the register to bear witness!" So the accuser will cry, "That they will order the register to testify I will give a mule!" and, unless the accused is afraid, he will answer, "Agbā!<sup>2</sup> Enter (thy stake)!" Which is the appeal to the Wambar called the "yigabāl" or "yigbāñ." Otherwise the small judge could have opened and examined the register in which the words were recorded.

19. Then the judge will take them with the register to the Wambar, who will receive three dollars from the loser, who will also pay two dollars for the judgment and ten dollars to the Government. But the interpreter has already received his two tamuns and will not take again. The winner will pay the "dass dass" money (because he is "contented") to the clerk, and, if the debt has to be paid, will receive the amount or take a surety for it.

20. If a small judge imprisons a man without right or confiscate his goods, that man may accuse him before a greater judge, saying, "Thou didst take my money without any sin of mine, with no debt upon me. Be punished!" Yet he will gain nothing himself, for the Government will take the goods of the judge and punish him. But, if the accuser cry, "I will imprison thee. I will exact a recompense from thee!" he may receive the

<sup>1</sup> vb. 547.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 613.

price of a life, which is eighty dollars, and the Government will take twenty dollars for the judgment.

21. The two Wambaras are Chief Judges and may sit alone or in the Chilot<sup>1</sup> with the Governor and jurors. Till a generation ago no Wambar in the provinces could give a decision in the appeal called the "yigabāl," so those who set it up had to go to Shoa to the Āfa Nigūs; but afterwards the Government gave them permission to decide wherever they might be. There are two Wambaras—the Left and Right, of whom the Right Wambar is the greater, and they are appointed by the Governor. If they go wrong and are accused, he must give their hand and send them up to Addis Ababa to be judged. Also the Nagādrās, who is Head of the Customs and Markets, has his own Wambar for cases that concern his jurisdiction. But from both the Wambaras of the Governor and the Wambar of the Nagādrās there is appeal to the Chilot or public assembly.

22. A man who has been reviled may cry, "Since thou didst say so and abuse me—that a compensation is fitting for me I will give honey!" And the accused will answer, "Even if I said so and abused thee, a compensation is not meet for me. Enter (thy stake)!" After this a small judge may not hear the matter further and they must go to the Wambar.

23. For this is the "magābia" or "entry." It is also the "yigabāl" when one cries, "Ṭaqil!"<sup>2</sup> or "Fold!" and the other says, "It will not cause me to fold (my stake)!" Then the first will cry, "That the Wambar will say to thee, 'Ṭaqil!' I will give an ambling mule!" and the other will tell him to enter his stake.

24. A man may agree with his adversary and go first to the Left Wambar after making the bond and, if he is

<sup>1</sup> vb. 335.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 718

defeated, may cry to the Right Wambar and thence to the Chilot. If it is Sunday, the Wambar will give him a "qālātei" or representative, in order that an inquiry may be made; but two men may not argue at law on a Sunday.

25. When the Wambars judge alone, first the Left Wambar will rise and swear, saying, "May God testify against her—my soul! The enemy of Menilik may He cast forth—the near with the sword, the distant with the cannon! Since . . . has spoken thus, the word is his! Let him conquer!" So the defeated man may, if he will, cry, "By thy word I raised up the stake! I will cause the Governor to listen!" Which is an appeal to the Chilot.

26. If a small judge imprisons a man without right, his kin may go early or late to the house of the Wambar and complain. So he will order his clerk to write and order the judge to bring his prisoner. Then the kin, after paying eight tamuns to the clerk, will present that letter before witnesses and the judge will be compelled to come to the Wambars, and will plead as plaintiff in front of them. For, when the prisoner cries, "Thou didst imprison me without due arrangement and didst confiscate my goods unlawfully! Be punished!" the judge can answer, "That by law and by thy own misdeed I confiscated thy goods I will give honey!" But the Wambars may not allow them to stake, and may say at once, "Release him!" or "Pay him compensation!" So too a small judge may order a defeated suitor to pay the judgment fee at once, and the other may say, "I will pay to-morrow!" Then the judge may imprison him, and he may send secretly to the Wambars, saying, "I will give the fee, only it is lacking now to my hand. The

judge but sought a pretext to imprison me ! ” And they may order the judge to bring the prisoner before them that they may hear the affair.

27. The Chilot<sup>1</sup> is the public assembly over which the Governor presides with the Wambars and chiefs as jurors. It is usually held on Wednesday and Friday, for men go there before eating and drinking, so that they will listen with intelligence till noon. The Governor may sit outside his palace or anywhere in the fields, if he wishes to watch the cultivation or other work.

28. There is a saying, “ After the Mass has been heard, after the Wambar has judged.” For the Governor may not overturn the judgment of the Wambars in the Chilot ; only, if a man appeals to him, the Governor may say, “ I have pardoned thee ! ” if it is a matter that has been heard by the Wambars alone in the “ *yigabāl* ” appeal. Those who cry out to the Governor will go to the Gibbi bearing a bundle of wood and will wait till they are called by the Chamberlain. The wood they leave behind for the kitchen of the palace.

29. If a man is oppressed by the Wambar, he may place a load of stone or wood upon his head and wait by the road side or at the gate till the Governor passes. Then he will lift up his burden and cry out, “ Abeit ! Abeit ! ” So the Governor, asking his name, will give him a “ *bāld-árabā* ” or protector to recall his name to mind, and will say, “ Come on the day of the Chilot ! ” and will wave him away. For, if the suit was heard before the Wambars alone, any one may go to the Governor and make the “ *abeftotā* ” or cry of appeal, saying, “ My Master, God show you (the truth) ! Christ give you observation ! Being defeated before the judge by cunning and lies, I

<sup>1</sup> vb. 335. Cf. p. 191.

went to the Wambar, who turned me away and would not listen. My surety I have allowed to be imprisoned." So the Governor may inquire into the case again from the beginning and will either cry, "Let the judgment remain!" or "Let his surety be set free at once! I have given So-and-so as qālātei or envoy!" or "Enter the suit afresh and argue!" And they will argue in front of the Left and Right Wambars and officers with the Governor above them on his dais or seat.

30. On Wednesday or Friday a man may appear in the Chilot and cry, "Honoured Dajjāzmāch! God show you! Christ give you a sign! When I went with the 'Yigabāl,' your Wambar gave judgment against me; therefore I have come, having told him that I will cause you to hear." Then the Left Wambar will rise up and point at him with his finger, and say, "True it is that I told thee to take up thy stake and judged against thee!" and so too the Right Wambar will testify. If the Governor thinks that they mistook their decision, he will cry, "It may not be! I have pardoned him! Let none touch him! Return to him the former judgment fee!" But he will not receive back the three dollars of the "yigabāl" nor the tamuns which he paid to the clerk and the interpreter.

31. A small judge may compel two parties to make the bond that they will go to the Chilot and they will each call a surety after crying, "Let Menilik die! We will come." So on a day of the Chilot, the judge will stand between them before the Governor and Wambars and officers, and will cry, "God show you (the truth)! This man said that he would give a mule and the other told him to enter his stake." Then the clerk will ask each whether his speech was so-and-so, and each will

answer, "Let Menilik die! This was my speech." After the jurors have listened and straightened out the speeches, the Chamberlain will cause them to testify—one from the right, one from the left, each in his turn swearing, "May He judge against it, my soul! May the sword judge against me! If I show favour, may He show favour against me! Let that party conquer!" Each juror—beginning from the left—having adjusted his shamma will step to the front and make the oath. Or he may swear, "If I show favour, may He show favour against me! With a hostile sword may he lay orders upon it (my soul)! May he cause me to bring forth my soul by bearing true testimony! For red and black may He not call me!" Lastly the Right Wambar will rise up and all with him save the Governor, and he will make the Wambar's oath and all will sit again when he sits. And after him the Left Wambar.

32. Or a juror may swear, "May God judge against my soul! May He disperse the foes of Menilik from afar with the cannon, from near with the sword! My brother, we ever bear witness in such a matter as our souls guide us. It was for him and not for thee that the witnesses spoke." Or "In bearing witness may God bring me to escape hell fire!"

33. In the Chilot, if the Governor desires to give his judgment, he must speak after the jurors have sworn and before the Wambar rises. For, after the Wambars have sworn, the Governor may not upset the judgment, since it is a decision of the soul which only the Āfa Nigús may change.

34. In the Chilot the clerk of the Governor will receive the judgment fees. Those who lack the money for the fees may remain in the prison in chains, but on a day of

festival the Governor will order them to be set free, saying, "For the sake of Mary I have pardoned you!" For, when a man is condemned, his hand will be taken unless he finds a security for the judgment fee or for the compensation of an adversary. Also he must pay two tamuns to each of the clerks of the Wambar and to the interpreters. Also the victor will give four tamuns to the clerk as "content" money and two tamuns to the interpreter. For of the jurors some may be Gallas, and the interpreter, standing between the parties, will cry their words in Amharic or Galla and the jurors may give their judgment in either tongue.

35. In a matter of murder the Chilot will investigate the killing and after keeping the man some time in the prison will send him under guard to Addis Ababa. For the "Governments that are above" have not granted permission to the Governor to hang or cut.

36. If the matter is one of punishment and flogging, there is an officer charged with it. When they say in the Chilot, "Cast that man and flog him!" that officer will cause his hands to be tied in front and his feet from behind with a loading thong. So he is flung prostrate, being pulled straight from the front, and behind, and may receive up to fifty lashes on his back. Also it is the custom that his clothes be taken by the flogger—except the drawers, so that he must beg clothes from his kin. But, if one steals in the market, they will beat him there, driving him in front of them that all may see and fear.

37. The prison of the Nagādrās is separate, for he has the power within the boundaries of the market and his judge may imprison those who beat one another or steal or are in debt. Also he has his own Wambar and Chilot.

On days when he holds his own Chilot, his judge will take the prisoners and state their fault, and they will be released if they pay the judgment fees. In the market bread and beer are sold and on them a tax is paid which is divided among the prisoners. If a woman does wrong, she is imprisoned in the house of the judge. If his officer captures a robber or brigand, the Nagādrās has no power, but will send him with his judge to the Wambar and to the big Chilot for the hearing.

38. The Āfa Nigús is the mouth of the Emperor in matters of law, and has with him twenty-four Wambar, who divide among themselves the affairs of Ethiopia. Thus one has knowledge of a certain part and, when a man pleads before the Āfa Nigús, that Wambar will be at hand. For there is a saying, "One stick does not light, one man may not give a judgment."

39. If a man wishes to appeal to Addis Ababa, he can cry in the Chilot "To above!" If he goes up, he will not carry a paper from his Wambar, but, if the Āfa Nigús listens, he will write to the Governor asking how went the matter and may order the witnesses to be sent up with the Wambar. So the appellant will, on his return, cause the paper to be read aloud in the Chilot, and if the Governor scorns it and imprisons him, he will later accuse the Governor at Addis Ababa, saying, "At that time when I gave him the paper—that he refused and despised you and imprisoned me I will give a mule." So the Government will either send him back to collect his witnesses or will write and order that Governor to come up.

40. If the Wambar goes up, he will take his register in which the words of the witnesses are written. Also many will go with him, for he should go up yearly for the



“pouring out” of his report, and every Governor will have at Addis Ababa his “Nágara Faji”<sup>1</sup> to complete his business and be his guardian in matters good and evil. If the Wambar delays more than a year, he should pay a fine of a thousand dollars according to the rule of the Āfa Nigús.

41. If two adversaries go up to Addis Ababa to plead, they must first pay each twenty dollars for the foot of the judge who will be sent with them.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 761.

## CHAPTER XX

### PUBLIC DISCOVERY OF CRIME

1. If a slave or animal is lost or if a man is killed, the "afarsātā" <sup>1</sup> or public inquiry may be produced by the Government and there is a special judge of the "aučāčīñ" <sup>2</sup> who will pitch his tent in the district or quarter of the town. It used to be the custom that this judge should camp each year in different parts from December after the reaping of the crops till Easter, so that men could go and have written down what was lost, but now the "afarsātā" is made more quickly, and he who has lost a slave or an animal will speak with the judge of the "aučāčīñ," who will ask the Right Wambar, and he will give permission in writing to the judge. The Wambar will receive a dollar with two tamuns for the clerk. If a man is killed and the murderer is unknown, the Government will produce the "aučāčīñ," especially if he has kin, who will be "reminders" and beg for an inquiry.

2. Those of the district who have to go to the aučāčīñ do not gather soon, for some may be absent and many are tardy. If it is in a market the officer of the guards will make proclamation saying, "By the Nigús! By the Bed! If ye come not to-day, there is a fine of ten dollars!" When all are assembled, the judge will set up a wooden fence which none may pass without permission. If it is a matter of "nafs" or killing, even babes and children will go so that it may be the sooner ended, nor will the cows be milked nor the cattle fed

<sup>1</sup> A Galla word.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 524?

unless the judge permits. But a slave or a woman may remain behind in each hut to bring food to those inside the fence. Nor will the chiefs of the district be absent, and they will sit among the people. The judge will receive his dinner by turn from those who asked for the holding of the inquiry—thirty pieces of bread, one jar of beer, and a dish of sauce—and he who fails to bring it will pay the double by the “*aṭafeitā*.”

3. The crowd of those shut in will select seven or eight or nine “*mirṭoč*,”<sup>1</sup> or chosen ones, who will sit apart with the clerk. First each of the chosen will take the oath, for a small hole will have been dug and fire lighted within. Then preparing water each will swear, saying, “What I saw and heard I will not hide, saying, ‘The guilty man is my brother.’ Even if he is my father I will tell.” So quenching the fire with the water he adds, “If I spoke a lie, may God likewise extinguish me!” and sweeping the ground with the stalk of maize and its cob he swears, “May God thus sweep away our seed, if I lie.” Also there may be closed eggs, a closed gourd, and a sickle, on which each will swear, saying, “If I conceal what I have seen and heard, may He close me as this gourd and cut my stomach thus!” So all present will take the oath. Also there will be two or three “birds” who swear that they will tell what they hear to none but the chosen ones, who also swear that they will tell to none but the clerk. Or perhaps the chosen ones will pass from group to group questioning each person and will find some one who saw or heard. Then they will return to the clerk and say, “We have heard the mouth of a bird tell that So-and-so was the thief.”

4. It may be fifteen days before the thief is found and,

<sup>1</sup> vb. 66.

when the birds have spoken, the priest will come bearing the Cross and Picture of Mary and will sit beside the chosen ones. Then one by one they will all pass and strike the Cross and Picture and swear, "May He perforate me as the Cross! May he obliterate me as the Gospel! I saw not!" But the "bird" will swear, "Having seen I spoke not with lies," having related all in secret to the chosen ones.

5. If there are none who saw or heard, they will cry out, "Egzio!<sup>1</sup> Egzio! Egzio! We saw not! We heard not!" and having sworn on the Cross and Gospel will depart.

6. If the name of the thief is known and told, the clerk will stand up and read aloud all that the chosen ones told him and the judge will seize the hand of the thief and all will scatter to their huts.

7. If the thief has escaped from the district, those who sit in the *aučāčiņ* will pay the money. If the countrymen of the district often steal and afterwards in the *aučāčiņ* cry, "Egzio! Egzio! Egzio! We saw not! We heard not!" the Governor will order them to pay the value of the thing stolen, casting upon them a "*tiloš*."<sup>2</sup> But they may appeal to Addis Ababa and a paper may come ordering their money to be returned. If the Governor forgets, an officer will advise them to carry wood and enter the palace as a reminder. So they will go crying, "Abeit! Abeit! My Master!" till they receive back their dollars.

8. If a traveller is killed in the district of a "*qoro*,"<sup>3</sup> the inhabitants must go out to the *aučāčiņ* and may give the name of the murderer. But if they cry out, "We know not! It was a passing brigand and not one of us.

<sup>1</sup> God = *Egzia vhcir*

<sup>2</sup> *vb 700*

<sup>3</sup> *p 185*

When we found the corpse, we cried out," there is no sin in them and they may scatter. For, if they know the name of the slayer, they will tell the "birds" and reveal his name. If he is the son of a chief, they may sit silent, but will agree together to pay whatever "ṭilōš" the Governor casts upon them. And the "gūmā" or blood money may be 300 dollars or 1,000.

9. Once a Nagādrās before leaving Addis Ababa begged from the Government a paper on which was written to the Governor, "Accuse not the Nagādrās in thy Chilot!" This he hid and waited. Afterwards, a small theft having arisen, the Governor ordered the Nagādrās, saying, "Bring forth the aučāčīñ! All those in the market—even the machine sewers." But the Nagādrās refused, saying, "Look at this paper! If in the market a 'warm corpse' dies or if a rifle is fired by some man unknown, we will bring forth the aučāčīñ. But if a slave or cow or sheep or goat is missing, it may have been taken far away. That you shall not say to me, 'Bring it forth!' I will give a dark horse!" And the Governor cried, "Enter (thy stake)!" and counting witnesses they asked Addis Ababa. The answer came by telephone to the Governor, who hid it, and when the Nagādrās was away, he ordered the officer of the market guards to produce the aučāčīñ and the judge of the afarsātā planted his tent in the market. But the officer of the guards refused and was imprisoned by the Governor. Then they informed the Nagādrās, who returned hurriedly, and it was long before they were reconciled.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE THIEF SEEKER

1. If anything is stolen from a man's house, he will rise at dawn and call a judge and five or six witnesses and show them. Then, taking a present of three or five dollars, he will go to the chief of the "leibā shāi"<sup>1</sup> and say, "To-day night a thief stole my goods. Pray give me the leibā shāi!" So the chief will give him the boy and the suppliant will seek out the "Chiqā Shūm" or district officer, who will set up at the door of the man's house a tent in which the boy may be guarded that night, lest he eat and drink. At dawn the servant of the chief of the leibā shāi will come with witnesses and will make the boy sit and, taking medicine from a bag, will mix it with milk and give the boy to drink. Then, filling a pipe with tobacco, he lays on the top another medicine and placing an ember on it he gives it to the boy to smoke. The first medicine that he draws from the bag is like fine red flour; the second is like black dried dung or coarse tobacco. Having smoked a little, the boy collapses like a drunken man and lies extended. Then the Chiqā Shūm three times passes round the boy's head a short yellow wand and strikes him thrice, intoning the word "Diraś!"<sup>2</sup> So the boy, rising with fixed eyes, reels here and there like a drunken man, at another time flying like a winged bird, while all follow behind. The Chiqā Shūm keeps hold of a sash tied round the boy's waist and, when

<sup>1</sup> vb. 168.

<sup>2</sup> "Arrive!" vb. 607.

they come to water, he (or the witnesses or servant) will carry the boy across, lest he touch it and suffer contamination. If they see animals on the road, the boy may run towards them, but the Chiqā Shūm will seize him in his arms till they pass. If they meet a man, the man will at once squat in the road, for the boy will slap and cuff him. So the boy follows the thief and, if he comes to the hut where the thief lived, will enter and make as if he were carrying out the stolen goods. Or he may get up on to the bed or mud dais and stretch himself where the thief slept. Or the thief may have pushed the money into a hole or under a stone, and sometimes the boy will go and pull it out, blowing hard with his breath. If there is a gathering of men and the thief is among them, the boy will go round the circle, as they all sit in fear, and knock with his knee each as he passes. When he comes to the thief, he will whisper softly to him as a robber to his accomplice and circle round him thrice and butt him with his knee, and puffing and blowing will at length fall upon his neck and seize him. So men know the thief and take him. Then the servant of the chief of the thief seeker lifts up the prostrate boy and carries him outside and covers him up and gives him bread and beer to make him vomit and be cured.

2. The medicine of the leibā shāi belongs to Shoa and the first leibā shāi was named Gultu <sup>1</sup> in the days of Amahaiyis, and from Gultu all thief seekers are descended. Money was once lost and Gultu, having drunk the medicine, seized a cow, and when she was slaughtered it was found inside. His two sons were chiefs of the thief seekers in the reign of Hailu Málakot, the father of Menilik, and their descendants are many. Thus a father

<sup>1</sup> The custom is probably Hamitic.

before his death will teach his son the science of the medicine and on his death the son will go up with his "kórojo" or bag and obtain the office from the Government. In the Palace of Addis Ababa is the chief of the searchers, to whom each chief in the provinces will send a yearly present; if the leibā shāi commits a wrong, this chief may write and forbid him to open his bag. For a leibā shāi may make agreement with thieves and share profits with them, giving the boy only charcoal and a red flower that resembles the medicine. Also he may advise thieves to walk in water or wash themselves at once. But, if the drug is true, the thief will be caught, for once Sahla Sillásiei, the grandfather of Menilik, took secretly some gold from his store and placed it in his mouth. Then he cried that he had been robbed and sent for the thief seeker. After the boy had drunk the milk, he reeled round and clasped the Emperor himself by the head. Thus it is that a man seized will be condemned, for "the qunnā<sup>1</sup> of the Nigús is not cut, nor is his justice made less or futile."

3. The boy who drinks will be a slave or the son of a poor father, and will be taught young, for when they reach puberty they lose their power. For six months or a year he is slowly accustomed to the medicine, and then his master will hide some goods and, if the boy finds them, will give him to drink for some man who has in truth lost some possession. In the jurisdiction of one Governor there is only one chief of the thief finders and he divides the medicine among his servants, sending them to different districts with two of the boys, so that, if one boy becomes contaminated by water or food, he may give the other to drink at once without waiting for the morrow. There

<sup>1</sup> Cf. note to p. 118.



may be 20 or 30 servants, but neither they nor the boys know what is the medicine. When a boy grows to manhood and marries, he is not honoured, for he will be weak in the head and a drunkard and a raver. When he drinks he has no strength and his eyes will stare as when he drank the medicine.

4. He who asks for a thief searcher will be questioned before witnesses as to his loss and will make the solemn 80 bond, saying, "Let Menilik die! So many dollars have I lost!" and, if the thief is taken, will receive that amount with his hand. Also he will pay one dollar to the chief and a quarter dollar to the boy for the "girdle" with which he was tied to the Chiqā Shūm. Also the servant will receive one dollar each time that he gives the medicine. The Chiqā Shūm must be paid, but the witnesses receive nothing. The thief will pay two dollars for the judgment fee when his hand is given to the owner of the goods. If the boy spends the night within a man's house, the host will pay the dollar next day for the opening of the bag and the quarter to the boy; the owner of the stolen goods must buy the dinner of all.

5. The witnesses who go with the boy may be neighbours or kin of the owner of the goods, and if they tire, they will wish to return, but may be constrained for one day. So the owner of the goods may have to change his witnesses from day to day.

6. The boy will pass the night in the tent or in a clean house empty of men. Or there may be two boys, if the owner of the goods can pay for the food and wishes to hurry. If the boy lies down in a deserted house or in a meadow or forest, the owner of the goods must pay for the opening of the bag. Or the servant, fearing for the

boy, may uncharm him knowingly, as when the house of a Governor was burnt and the boy followed the burner down into the plains, where the witnesses died of fever.

7. A wrong-doer may know that water defeats the boy, and so he will wash himself. Or he will run to the edge of a precipice and pretend to jump down, or will climb a tree and with a rope pretend to hang himself. This the thief finder will do also, and must be restrained. Once a murderer cast the body into a river and the boy led men to it, acting as though he were dragging a corpse, and would have fallen in if he had not been held. Then he led them back to Addis Ababa from house to house, till the murderer was found.

8. If a man is taken falsely by the thief searcher, he will accuse the chief of the thief finder and 'count his witnesses and the Governor will order the chief to bring his bag and will write to the Government at Addis Ababa, praying them to send another chief. If the latter knowingly lets a thief alone, his goods will be confiscated. Also, if a man be taken falsely, the chief will pay twice the damage and the Government will fine him a hundred dollars, saying, "Thou hast caused the qunnā of the Nigūs to be deceived. Hand over thy bag!"

9. He who is taken by the thief searcher may not be called a thief, for he will cause his reviler to pay a compensation, crying to the judge, "When the thief finder seized me by the qunnā of the Nigūs, thou didst call me a thief. Let me imprison thee!" Therefore there is a saying, "A reconciliation is not destroyed nor is the law. Dying it is not buried, falling it is not broken." As it was, so does it stand firm.

10. But the Europeans long ago made agreement with Jān Hoi, saying, " Even if we lose goods, we will not send for the thief searcher, nor, if the goods of Abyssinians are lost, shall the boy enter our houses. For ye yourselves do not all trust the thief finder, and we prefer to recover what is stolen by other means."

## CHAPTER XXII

### PROCLAMATIONS

1. When the Government speaks to the people by proclamation, the clerk at Addis Ababa will carry the message and the Chamberlain with two flags will take up his stand in the market. Then the big drum will be struck forty-four times, so that by the last beat all may be gathered together to listen. The clerk, having adjusted his shamma, will read the message aloud, while the Chiqā Shūm, receiving the words from him, will repeat them in Amharic and Galla.

2. So too in every town, whether the order has come from above by letter or by telephone or whether it is the message of the Governor alone. A Nagādrās cannot speak a proclamation, since that of the Governments and Governor alone stands firm. In a chief town they will sound the big drum, but in a small market the Chiqā Shūm and clerk will hang up a dábbalo or sheep-skin as a sign. So men will know and, if they delay, the officers will cry out, "By the Nigús! Come! Listen to the proclamation!" and, if they still tarry, they may be beaten with sticks. For a big man may have lost his goods or his beasts may have been stolen, and there will be a reward for the finder. Or an officer may have been given a sealed paper by the Government and the Governor will call the Qoro<sup>1</sup> and Mislániei saying, "Lo! So-and-so has been granted office in my province. The tithes and chase are to be in his hand." So on a market day the flags will be set up

<sup>1</sup> pp. 183, 185.

right and left and after the beating of the drum the Chiqā Shūm will stand up while the clerk reads the paper. Afterwards it will be the new officer who will collect the tithes and in his hands will be the fruits of the chase—the skin of the lion, the horn of the buffalo, and the tooth of the elephant. He who goes down to hunt will first buy a paper from the officer and, if he kills an elephant, will deliver the right tusk to the Government.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### WOMEN

1. There is a saying, "Woman is erring, her breast is lissome, her arm is weak." For women are not able to agree, nor is their speech tight and true. Thus her bond stands not firm, nor can she be a juror. Yet she may be a witness and may be made to swear on the door of the Church at the women's entrance.

2. If a woman asks a man to lend her money, he may lend it without a surety. When the day of payment comes and she has no dollars, he may say, "Make solemn stipulation for me before the judge!" So she must seek out some man to stipulate for her. If she can find no man, the judge will tell the creditor to call two sureties and will give him her hand; so he will take her home and imprison her. But, if after a month she still has no money, he may consider the cost of the food and will cry, "Beyond loss what is my gain? If thou findest money, pay me! Make Mary thy surety and go!" So he will take her again to the judge and free her and his sureties.

3. Of old there was an Empress who commanded her subjects, saying, "Build me a house above the earth and below the heavens," and for long vexed them, so that men honour not their speech and understanding. Yet in Shoa there are women who surpass men in pleading, and such a one will stand before the judge, leaning on her stick, and will stretch out her hand and stamp like a man; for

she will put on drawers with her gown over them, and will double her fine shamma over her shoulders, winding muslin round her head. A woman advocate the judge will address in the masculine,<sup>1</sup> but, if she says in an oath, "Let Menilik die!" he will say to a man, "Make the bond for her! Her 80 is not fast."

4. The word "Ato" is used for honour when one addresses a man who has no rank. For women "Wáizaro" is used, even if she is one who draws water and has no mule with a supporter to left and right.

5. The dress of a woman is a gown tied with a girdle, which at home she may unloose. When the wife of a soldier goes out to the market or to a neighbour's hut, she will not wear drawers underneath; but on a muddy day or when she goes to Church she will put them on, and wrap a fine shamma over her gown and over all a poncho, if she has one. Also a female slave may follow her abroad. First she binds a piece of muslin across her forehead, knotting it at the nape of the neck; then opening her shamma she brings it up from behind over both shoulders and over the head. The left side she throws across the nose and right shoulder, so that only her eyes are seen, and above all she may tie a thin veil or a "kininnib" if she desires to hide her face. Above this she will slip on her black poncho and place a grey felt hat on her head. But the daughter of a "master" and the wife of a gentleman will put on her drawers and ride a mule, and, when she mounts, they will spread a shamma round her as a curtain. In front will go women servants on foot and a man servant will support her right and left. At the church the slaves will wait outside, one holding her hat, but, when they return home, the clean shammass of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 133.

the slaves will be replaced in the box. If she is the wife of a great officer, she may have also an umbrella of green silk.

6. When they appear before great persons, free women need not make the adjustment of their shammas. A female slave will make it by opening wide her shamma and bringing it over the back of her right shoulder; thence under the left armpit and throwing the end up from the back over the right shoulder. Also servants, when they walk abroad with the mistress, will bring up the shamma from behind over both shoulders; the right end is then passed over the left shoulder and the left end over the right shoulder.

7. A great lady on day of festival, when she goes to the church or visits a friend, will wear the flat anklets of silver gilt that are called "dikkwot." These are three fingers broad and are hinged so that the foot may enter. The price is thirty or forty dollars and, as they move, they tinkle like the doqā on the neck of a mule. A humbler lady will buy the round anklets for two dollars and silver bracelets for six or seven dollars. On her fingers she may wear a ring of silver wire or a horn ring of buffalo horn named the "kolbā." But many have laid them aside, for rings on the right hand will irk her as she spins, and rings are dear to slaves.

8. An evil wife will be sent away, for "a loose tooth, if it is not rooted out, will not cease from aching." An evil husband may give his wife fat to eat and hydromel in plenty; together with embroideries for her robes, but, if his stick and mouth vex her, she will mourn to her kin saying, "For me, my brethren, cabbage in peace were better with a kindly husband." So she may take her half and go.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### DEBT

1. A man may have lent money to another or deposited it with him. If he turns him away when he demands it, the creditor may go to a judge and beg him, saying, "Give me a qālātei or envoy!" Then the judge will choose a third person and say, "Do thou go as a qālātei and make the solemn bond with the debtor! If he agrees, let him come here of his own accord." So the envoy will go and appoint witnesses, and cry, "Here thou art?" The judge has ordered thee to come with me at once, without staying the noon or night, and my word is that of the judge. My surety is So-and-So that I speak the truth. Let Menilik die!" If the debtor delays a night, he will be seized and punished, for this envoy is the word of authority, and is like a sealed paper sent by a messenger who does not examine the matter himself. If the debtor holds him of no account and abuses him, the qālātei will complain to the judge and receive a compensation.

2. If a creditor meets his debtor on the road, he may follow him, crying, "By the Bed! By the State! Go not!" But he may not lay hands on him, lest the other say, "He hit me." If he meets a passer-by, he will cry, "Lo! This man, whom I adjured by the Bed, would not stop. Take heed, for thou wilt be my witness!" And, when he finds a fit person, he will say, "Come! Judge me!"; or he may appeal to several passers-by.

So that person must return with them to a big judge, and hand them over, saying, "This is the accuser. Thus and thus they said to me." This first inquirer and adjuster of issues is called the "descending water" judge, since travellers flow here and there and may be lighted upon anywhere. If the passer-by refuses to listen, he may be accused in turn, and if he denies that he was asked, the accuser may stake an ambling mule and count his witnesses, since, even if they were alone, the accuser will count himself. But the "descending water" judge receives nothing for his toil. Only it is the custom that all who hear should run to aid when a man cries out upon the road.

3. Before the judge the creditor will cry, "Let him call a surety or link us together!" If no surety can be found, they will knot together their two shafmas and watch each other, lest the debtor creep away in the press. Afterwards the creditor may cry, "That thou before witnesses didst take my money and make thy own head surety I will give honey!" and will count out his witnesses. If these are distant, the judge will appoint a commissioner and they will all go to seek those witnesses, and, if they bear witness for the creditor, he will cry, "Take up the stake!" and the debtor must answer, "I took it up." Then the other will ask, "Let whom die?" So they will make the 80 bond and will return to the judge, to whom the judgment fee must be paid—also the fee for the foot of the commissioner and for the interpreter and clerk. Also the creditor must call two sureties that the hand of the debtor is not lost and that he is not oppressed, and will wait a little near the judge while a friend or a servant looks for a chain which the creditor will bind upon the right

wrist of the debtor. On arrival at home he may add leg irons.

4. One man may say to another, "There are fifteen dollars on thee!" and the other will deny, crying, "Assát! It is a lie!" Before the judge the accuser may say, "That this money is upon thee I will give a horse," and his adversary will answer, "It is not upon me! Enter (thy stake)! Count thy witnesses!" Then the creditor may cry, "I have no witness. Swear for me! Thou thyself art my witness!" and the accused will answer, "Agreed! It (thy word) has reached me. I will swear." "Who is to die?" "Let Menilik die! I will swear." "And I, let Menilik die, will make thee swear."

5. If the creditor has seized the debtor in a far land, where he cannot find witnesses or sureties, the judge may link them both together in the prison till the creditor can send a letter to his sureties, who will write to the judge, saying, "We are sureties for the judgment fee. Please send them both here!" But the judge will not write himself. When they walk about, the accused will be on the left, for his right wrist is chained to the left wrist of the accuser.

6. The chainer will feed his prisoner who, if he is a big man, will eat with the master of the house; but to a lad or to a poor man only enough will be given that he be not satiated. For, if a prisoner eats and drinks too well, he may not pay quickly and may mock his keeper; but if he eats dry, he will pay with speed. \*

7. If the prisoner falls ill or has no kin, the lender will grow weary and release him, telling him to pay when God provides. Or he will cause him to call as security one of the Saints, such as George or Gabriel or Mary, and

will free him before the judge, trusting in the shrine. And if he still fails to pay, the creditor going to the shrine may cause it to make security of a leaning stick or of a candle. For he will cry to it, "I, having trusted in thee, released him and to-day I made thee give security!" and taking a candle maybe will place it in his hut. Afterwards he will grieve for having abused the *tābôt*, and will cry, "Thou being a fool and he being clever, thou hast been made by me to give a guarantee. Strength I have none myself! Do thou search and seize him for me!" So, if that shrine is a strong hearer, in one month or two months, according to the purity of his heart, he will not fail to find that debtor. And the priests will encourage the creditor, saying, "May Michael aid thee and cause the debtor to wander round and may He cast him into thy hand!"

8. A man may be surety for another and may fear, mistrusting him. So he will say, "Brother, I hear that thou dost plan to escape. Give me a *ṭállafā*<sup>1</sup> surety!" So he will be compelled and, if the debtor pays not his creditor, the first surety will be made to pay, but he in turn can seize and chain the "*ṭállafā wās*" till he pays. If the debtor refuses to find a *ṭállafā* surety, the surety will be perplexed lest, when he accuses the debtor, he cry out to the judge, "Chain me!" or "Surety by my own head!"

9. If a man has lent money without a security, he may afterwards fear and order the debtor to call one; but the other may refuse, saying, "I have no surety! Surety by my own head!" So the creditor will take him to the judge, who will order him to call two guarantors for the hand of the debtor, who will be chained in the house of

<sup>1</sup> vb. 703.

the creditor. But no stake was made and thus no fee is paid to the judge nor to the clerk. After some days the kin may come and guarantee the debt or pay the money, and if it is paid, the creditor must take his prisoner back to the judge and cry, "Here ye be! He has paid and here is his hand! Release my sureties!"

10. If a debtor is defeated at law, the creditor may tire after many weeks and release him before the judge after causing him to swear, saying, "I will be surety with my own head. I will seek for work and pay thee the money!" But that debtor may be indebted to a third man and, lest he be seized again, the first creditor will fasten a short chain to his wrist before freeing him. So the debtor will repulse the second creditor by showing him the chain and tell him the name of the first, and together they may visit the latter. Then the debtor will say, "I am bound to thee. Forbid this other man till I pay thee!" So the second creditor may cry to the first, "For this reason only art thou to forbid me my money? Make sureties for me before the judge!" And there he will receive from the first creditor two sureties for the hand of the debtor, lest he escape after paying the first. So the first creditor will guard him more straitly, and after payment will take him to the judge to deliver his hand.

11. A creditor may demand his money before the judge, and the debtor may deny that there is money against him. So the creditor may leave him without making a bond or calling for his surety. Afterwards, if the creditor sue him again, the debtor may confess, saying, "There is money against me." Then the accuser will cry, "Having confided thou didst deny me!" and the other will deny it. So the creditor will say, "That it was averment and denial,<sup>1</sup> I will give honey!" and will

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 139.

defeat him with the witnesses who heard before. But if at first the matter had matured, they would have made the bond together, either on the first day or after a week, if the debtor had asked for a delay, saying, "I will bring my mouth and speak!" Also the debtor would have called a surety and thus could not have changed his speech, for the creditor would have ordered him to measure out the 80 bond and would have received the money or imprisoned the surety.

12. Before a war proclamation will be made, "Rise up! Make ready for an expedition!" Then a creditor who has a debtor chained in his hut may leave him there guarded, or may link him to a servant and take him to the war. Or the chief of the debtor may pay his debt to free him or may go surety for him.

13. A man may lend money to another who, after a little, may return it to him in front of a witness. If the creditor demands it a second time and takes his adversary to the judge, the debtor will cry, "That I gave thee the dollars I will give honey!" and counting his witnesses will defeat him, for the creditor lacks one. And they will have changed places, for the accuser stands to the right till the accused cries, "My witnesses are greater. Turn! I shall defeat thee!" So the accuser may move aside in fear and become the accused or he may refuse and cry, "The matter does not cause me to move!" Then the accused will say, "That the matter does cause thee to move I will give honey!" and the accuser will reply, "That the judges will tell me to stand in this place and defeat and strike thee down I will give two honeys!" After this the case must go to the Wambar or Chief Judge, for it is "Yigabāl."

14. When the debtor cried, "That I gave thee the

dollars I will give honey ! ” the creditor may fear and reply, “ Thy bar is strong for me ! ” and will pay only half the stake or one and a half dollars instead of three dollars.

15. When the accused cried, “ Turn ! ” and the accuser agreed in fear, the other moved across and may have cried, “ That I counted thee out the dollars in front of So-and-so I will give an ambling mule ! ” But the stake may frighten the accuser, who will say, “ This is not my capacity ! Lower the stake for me ! ” So the other will cry, “ I will give a horse ! ” and again the other will cry, “ It is not my power ! Lower ! ” Then the accused will reply, “ That it is thy power I will give honey ! ” and the other will say, “ It is not my power ! Enter (thy stake) ! ” So the accused will cry out, “ Know for me, ye jurors ! When I said to him that I would give a horse, he said he had no power. That he has the power know ye for me ! ” And the accuser will say, “ Nay ! Know not against me ! When he said that he would give a horse, I said that it was not my strength and now I cannot ! ” Afterwards, if it appears to the jurors that the accuser is poor, they will testify in his favour ; otherwise they will bear witness against him and the accused will cry to him, “ Tell me to enter that horse—the dark one ! ” and the other must say, “ Enter ! ” and will be defeated, since he must take up both the horse and the honey or call a surety.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE LAW (b)

1. If a suitor knows not the "mouth" and is ignorant of pleading, he will seek out an advocate and give him three or four dollars as a "mánnašo" <sup>1</sup> for the rising up and will agree to pay from seven to ten dollars according to the suit. Also he will buy him hydromel, for he may speak all day long in the assembly. But some advocates are deceitful and if they can will set up the appeal, so that the judge is unable to make the parties plead; therefore the Governor may not allow such men to act for another. There is a saying, "The pleader and the minstrel are one, for their voice is never still."

2. Before a suit a man will take counsel with his advocate, for it may be better to cry, "I will give a horse." When he hires an advocate, first the advocate will cry to him before the assembly, "Beget me!" and the hirer will answer, "Lo! I have begotten So-and-so." Then the advocate will cry, "I have been begotten," and the judge will ask, "Who is to die thou wast begotten?" and the advocate will reply, "Let Menilik die! I was begotten." Then he will say to the adversary, "Accept me!" and, if accepted, will begin the interrogation.

3. If a suitor is defeated, the advocate will receive only the fee for the "rising up." If he accepts a fee from one man and larger fee from another man, the advocate may be accused. But this a matter for punish-

<sup>1</sup> vb. 365.



ment and not for compensation, for the accuser will cry, "Thou, having consumed my fee, didst return it! Be punished!" and the advocate may be flogged or his goods may be confiscated.

4. If a man refuses to accept the advocate of his adversary, the advocate can cry, "If he accepts me, let him! If he refuses, let him receive me with honey!" or "by forty-eight!" and will compel acceptance, unless previously there was some agreement or bar between them. This bar is called the "giyyid" or "gadab"<sup>1</sup> which are like the gudbā, a dyke dug to prevent the passage of man or beast. For two hostile advocates will make the 80 bond before elders and will swear for a hundred or two hundred dollars not to pass the bounds against each other. For each will swear, saying, "Do thou not pass the bounds against me and I will not against thee! Nor will I demand compensation from thee and do thou not seek one from me!" So, if one forgets this bar, the other can say, "Thou hast destroyed the agreement!" and will take from him the amount. Though they say that one eloquent advocate will defeat eleven others, yet they are generally friends and may be partners to aid each other secretly—like the "wanfal" which is mutual labour.

5. The advocate may cry to the accused, "Be questioned!" But he may remain silent. So the advocate may cry again, "Be questioned!" and again he may be silent. If a third time he does not answer, the advocate will say to the judge, "Make him call a surety for his 'dannabs'<sup>2</sup> (obstinate silence), for he is like a jibbing horse!" and this the judge will do. But at the third "Be questioned!" the accused may reply, "Let me be

<sup>1</sup> vb. 619.

<sup>2</sup> vb. 593.

questioned ! ” or “ Question me ! ” and they will begin :—

“ Yesterday I gave thee ten dollars which thou didst take home.”

“ Yes ! But they were a gift.”

“ Thou didst ask me in front of So-and-so and So-and-so for a loan and I gave them thee as a loan. What wilt thou give ? ”

“ That thou didst tell me to take them as a gift I will give a dun horse ! ”

So they will count their witnesses and argue.

6. A crafty advocate may cry, “ Be questioned ! ” and the accused will reply, “ Question me ! ” Then the advocate will say, “ Be questioned ! Didst thou give me this poncho ? ” and the other not paying attention may agree. Then the advocate will say, “ Be questioned ! To-day thou didst tell me that yesterday thou didst give me this poncho ! ” and the other may then deny it.

“ Be questioned ! Now having testified to me thou hast denied to me ! ”

“ I have not testified nor have I denied ! ”

“ That thou hast done both—that at one moment thou didst confess and at another didst deny—I will give an ambling mule ! ”

“ Enter thy stake ! I did not testify and deny.”

“ Know for me, ye wet <sup>1</sup> jurors ! ”

“ Nay ! Know not against me ! ”

And the jurors will bear witness as they heard. Once an advocate cried twenty times to a simple hunter “ Be questioned ! ” and “ I give honey,” so that the hunter became confused and enraged, and, drawing his sword from his right side with his right hand, struck the

<sup>1</sup> p. 138.

advocate. Then the judge, fearing for himself, cried, "Thou hast heaped debt on debt!" For the crafty advocate is hated by many, and is often beaten. So any clever man who knows the language of the court may borrow a mule or a sword from a fool and rob him of it by his constant cry, "Be questioned!"

7. The hate of two advocates may grow stronger daily and become as bitter as "koso" to the mouth. As they stand right and left before the judge, the one, as the other argues, may wave the corner of his shamma and touch the other. Then the latter will cry, "We two, being adversaries before the judge, I having given my foot to the 'wadar' which hobbled me and my neck to the yoke—thou hast touched me! Take heed, all of you! He has some evil medicine. I will make thee pay a compensation. Let me imprison thee!" And he who touched him will answer, "Since my hand unseeing touched thee, I will not recompense thee. I will not enter a stake." Then the other may stake and call upon witnesses and, if he wins, may receive ten ounces of silver as compensation and the loser will pay three dollars as judgment fee. But, if the opponent fears the stake, he will not cry, "Enter thy stake!" but "Thy ágwurā (bar) was too strong for me!" and will pay only the compensation and not the stake or judgment fee. So they will begin again the root matter.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE LAW (c)

1. The interpreter is a servant of the judge who stands between the suitors, and at the end will receive from each two tamuns. But if the two do not stake, the interpreter will not be paid. He is named the "simā balau"<sup>1</sup> as he tells a man to listen.

2. In the crowd before the judge the accused may take the right hand. Then the accuser will cry, "Turn! The right is mine, for it was I who cried to the passer-by to judge us and produced a judge and preceded thee." Then the judge, knowing whose is the right, will say to the accused, "Turn!" and, if he refuses, the accuser may cry, "I, being the accuser, will take the right like the Saints, whose work is to the right towards God. And do thou take the left like Satan, whose work is left-handed and deceitful. If he turns, let him! If he refuses, let him turn with honey!" So they will dispute over this stake.

3. Also men carry a long straight wand called a zang, and both suitors may hold one in front of the judge. So he who produced the passer-by may cry, "Having produced the judge, having straightened<sup>2</sup> the wand, I am he who shall speak first," and he can constrain the other by a stake. He whose turn it is to argue will hold it in his left hand, raising it wildly to heaven, and will stamp the earth with his right foot. Or he may hold it in silence and throw out his finger to expose his argument; but the adversary will place his wand under his arm-pit and lean on it silent.

<sup>1</sup> p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> p. 84.

4. The accused may wish to speak before the other has exposed the matter of the complaint, but the accuser can cry, "That thou speak not before I finish my argument I constrain thee by white honey!" or "an ambling mule!" So he will finish the "*fijjotā*,"<sup>1</sup> and say at the end, "Take thy *fijjotā*!" But, if the mouth and mind of the other do not allow him to remain silent, he may say in the middle, "Give me my *fijjotā*!" Then the first will compel him to take up the "*ṭibbiq*,"<sup>2</sup> which is the restraining stake. At last, when the first has finished his *fijjotā*, the other, after waiting some time in silence, will ask, "Brother, give me the *fijjotā*!" and the first will answer, "Take it and return it to me!" and he in turn will be constrained by a stake not to interrupt.

5. The other may say to the other in his rage, "Lie not!" Then the other will cry, "Thou hast transgressed me!" for his mouth has passed the bounds and has turned aside from the procedure. This he will deny, but the abused will say, "That it was *ilfit*<sup>3</sup> or transgression I will give honey!" If the other tells him to take up his stake, the abused will cry to the jurors, "Know for me!" and the other will cry, "Know not against me!" So each juror, rising up in turn, may swear, "God save my soul when I bear witness to the truth! It was transgression" or "It was not. Thou didst only say what was in thy heart." A man may be in a suit with a tanner and may interrupt him to cry "Thou art a tanner!" but this is not transgression, since he is in truth a tanner.

6. If one accuses an ignorant man suddenly, they will both give sureties before the judge for the judgment fees, and the fool may say, "With my mouth!" and may sit and ponder. Then he will add, "It (thy word) reached

<sup>1</sup> vb. 761.<sup>2</sup> vb. 689.<sup>3</sup> vb. 411.

me," and they will begin to argue. Or they will both call a surety and set up witnesses and make the bond to appear in some days. On the day the accused will speak or, if he is afraid, will cry, "My head is surety," or "I have none. Give me a fijjotā!" And the fijjotā must be granted and he will make the bond to appear in a week with his advocate, if he has said, "With my advocate."

7. When they say, "In one day the 80 bond does not touch," they mean that he who swore the bond may be far away and may not arrive till evening; but his bond will not fall due at noon nor may he be touched till the next day. After two men have made a stipulation together, there can be nothing more, for, if one raises up the matter a second time, his adversary will cause him to measure out the 80 bond and pay it. Hence the saying, "With a wet stick men light not a fire, with a second 80 bond they cannot knot." Thus a man accused a second time can cry, "With the 80 bond I shut thee in, with poison I pricked thee." For the 80 bond is poison and the defeated adversary is like one dead or chained. Also he must pay the judgment fee and make a new bond or call a surety.

8. A suitor after a defeat will bend his head and turn his back to depart in gloom. Hence the saying, "Turn the back! Turn down the face!" which is said of a foolish boy who pursues at law a knowing man. For the latter will mock him, crying, "At morn, at morn, the sky, the sky; at eve, at eve he sees the ground." For the lad will go home sulking, having piled debt on debt because of the "ṭiqil"<sup>1</sup> which is the folding. His adversary will always bar him by the "ugur" or "ṭibbiq,"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 145.

lest he speak out of his turn, and the lad will always interrupt, since his heart fires up like linseed. So four or five bars may be written against him by the clerk, and each time the cunning man will cry :

“ Take up (the stake) ! ”

“ I took it up.”

“ Who is to die ? ”

“ Let Menilik die ! I took it up.”

“ And I—let Menilik die !—have caused thee to take it up. Taqil ! Pay fine on fine ! ”

Then the lad will agree or will cry, “ There is no cause for me to wrap fine on fine.”

And the other will reply, “ That there is cause for thee to make the *ṭiqil* I will give an ambling mule.” If the boy cries, “ Enter thy stake ! ” the case has become an appeal—the “ *yḡabāl* ”—and they will both go to the Wambar. This *ṭiqil* is a load that one must carry and pay. There was once a woman who in some small matter set stake on stake till she lost all that she had, and was chained as debtor. When a new Governor came, he listened to her tears and pondered, chewing at a cob of maize. Then he asked her, “ From one cob are not many cobs born ? So with thy stake and judgment fees which have destroyed thee,” and paid himself her debts. ”

9. If a mute disputes with an adversary, he will point with his finger to a man whom he calls as his surety and will strike his own breast. If he desires to say, “ I give honey,” he will point his finger at his adversary and lick his palm, for honey is sweet. When he wishes to say, “ I give a horse,” he will wave both hands extended, and if he stakes a mule, he will lay a hand near each ear, moving it up and down.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### SOME OFFICERS

1. The Mislániei<sup>1</sup> is the chief of the "mādbeit" or kitchen, who, knowing all the serfs, will take from them the taxes of his master and is their judge in cases affecting their contributions. So he will collect the sheep, goats, money, flour, honey, and butter. His rank will be according to the greatness of his master, and he may be a Fítaurāri or Qaññāzmāch or Gerāzmāch or only Ato So-and-so. Every month or two months, having gathered in the contributions in company with the Qoro, he will go with him to the house of his master and deliver the dollars to the Bájirond or Treasurer, who will check his register. The flour, grain, honey, and butter he will give to the Steward and the goats and bulls to the flesh house.

2. The word "mādbeit" has two meanings. First, it is the kitchen where the bread is baked, for "mād" means the table ready set with bread. So, when a public feast is prepared, if a man rises up to depart, another will constrain him, saying, "What is it? The 'mād' being near, wilt thou go and spurn it? Squat and eat and then go!" Secondly, a mādbeit may be the land set apart to furnish food for the Government or for an officer. Even a Fítaurāri or one with many serfs may have for his kitchen a piece of land near at hand, for this will have been chosen out from the beginning and its tenure may not be changed.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "like me," cf. vb 71.



3. The Bájirond is the Treasurer, guardian of the property of his master—dollars, shirts, swords, plain or decorated shields, rifles, revolvers, cartridges, and spears. When his master confers an honour and “ gives a name ” and office to a follower, he will order the Treasurer to bring a shirt, cloak, fine shamma, sword, drawers, waist-cloth, and the furniture of a horse and mule.

4. The Azzāž<sup>1</sup> is the Steward who orders the servants and is the accountant of the flour, bread, honey, coffee, red pepper, onions, geisho, and barley, for he is like the wife of an officer and will be punished if there is want. He it is who orders the Mislániei, telling him to bring what is needed. So the Mislániei will go in haste to take counsel with the Qoro and seek among the serfs. In the flesh house of a Palace the head is a Gerāzmāch or a Qañ-nāzmāch,\*but the Steward is the chief of the kitchen.

5. In a Palace will be many Aggāfāris or Chamberlains with a chief Aggāfāri over them. Without his permission none may enter, till he speaks with his master. On the day of a public feast the Steward will make the arrangements for the food and laying of tables, and the Chamberlains will pick out and choose in order of merit the officers and soldiers. For, having first tucked in their shammas, they will run here and there, ordering the mass, and when all is ready, will admit each to his place.

6. The Chiqā Shum is the “ Soil Officer,” and is the agent of the Nigūs. He will be an Amāra, and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he will not pay a compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated. In the Galla country he is named the Koiyei and in Wolāmo the Gūdā. His office may be inherited and his son may succeed him, for the ancestor

<sup>1</sup> vb 455.

was appointed long ago. If the land is a "gult" or a present from the Nigús to some high officer, he may be dismissed at pleasure. Or the office may be by turn, and of ten men each may hold for a year, being appointed at the Feast of St. John when the New Year begins, and paying one dollar for his promotion. One who is absent may hire another to rule, and even a woman may be a Chiqā Shum and may hire a man, if she wishes not the work.

7. During office the Chiqā Shum will not pay tribute nor has he serfs of his own. The orders which he receives from the Government he will tell to the Mislániei, who will command the Qoro. If one disobeys him, he will take the man before the Malkaññā or the Qoro, and if the matter grows big, before the Mislániei and the Eandarāsei,<sup>1</sup> who is the sub-Governor.

8. All the money of the Government is in his hands. Thus there will be a Chiqā Shum to command the serfs, another to sit in a customs gate as accountant with the clerks, and another in a market as overseer. For on the roads there are "doors" where taxes will be taken from those who pass and laden beasts and men must pay a "kuotei" for the treading. In the market there are taxes on honey, shammās, animals, pepper, pots, griddles, and holders of stalls for piece goods. Besides this he has the labour of the tithes on the produce of lands.

9. The Qoro is the officer who, in the Galla country, lives in the district once ruled by his father. He, like the Chiqā Shum, pays tribute only with his legs, running up and down to carry the orders of the Government. His office will descend from father to son. If his work

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "as my head."

is not done, he will be accused by the Chiqā Shum and be imprisoned. Round parts of Shoa such as Addis Alam, Tulu Dimtu, Ādā, Salāli, Ādā Barga, and Meita he is called "Abba Sangā"; in Wolāmo "Rasha"; and in the Amāra countries of Bareisa, Bulgā, Minjār, Gishei, and Manz he is the "Dug." Also near Dabra Birhān he is the "Abba Dulla." But the office of "Dug" is not hereditary, for the Government may appoint any one who petitions and the "Dug" will pay the yearly tribute of honey. So, too, the office of Abba Sangā. Yearly both the Chiqā Shum and the Qoro will give a present to the Governor—maybe a lion's skin or bull or sheep. If one strikes the Qoro, he will pay a compensation only, nor will there be confiscation.

10. A Malkaññā is one who possesses serfs, and therefore will be a small or a great man according to their number. In the Galla country an officer with many serfs will appoint a Mislāniei to control them. Thus the land of the Anuaks—who are called Yambos by the Abyssinians—is serfland and their Malkaññā is the Governor at Gorei, who sends his Mislāniei to receive as tribute ivory, lion skins, and hides of buffalos. Neither the Malkaññā nor the Mislāniei will pay tribute himself. The judgment fees taken by the Malkaññā are for himself, but those taken by a Mislāniei belong to his master. But in Shoa the position of Malkaññā is not fixed by serfs but by the land, on which the Malkaññā will live under the orders of the Qoro.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### LAND

1. When land is measured, the "qalād" is used, which is a rope made of hide. Two pieces are plaited together and a third piece is wound round. It is a hundred and twenty cubits in length, and, if it is thrown eleven times along and seven times across, the area will form a gāššā of some fifty-seven acres. The officer who is in charge of the measuring is called the "Qalād ṭāi"<sup>1</sup>—the thrower of the rope—and from time to time he will come from Addis Ababa with his clerk and register. With him will go also to the land witnesses and the clerk of the Governor and the Chiqā Shum and Qoro, and their dinner will be provided by the occupier of the land. But the measurements will not remain fixed till after the third throwing of the rope, for the land must be measured three times with an interval of many months between the throwings.

2. The first time the thrower, without using the rope or stretching it carelessly, may give a man a broad piece of land, but the second time he will decrease the area, and again the third time. For in forest country after the first throwing a man will bring the land quickly into cultivation, and therefore the thrower is liberal. Only the third time will the measurement stand fast. If the occupier held three gāššās, he must, after the third throwing, choose and take up one gāššā, giving the other

<sup>1</sup> vb. 700.

two back to the Government and paying tribute for the one. But, if he will, he may buy the other two from the Government, or any other man may buy them. It is after the third throwing that the tribute is entered in the register, for the first time the land may have been measured roughly with the eye alone without the rope.

3. In former times the owners of such land may have been Gallas, and these were settled elsewhere by the Government. Then the Government gave it to favourite servants—three or four *gāššās* maybe—and made the land a “gult.” Later came the thrower of the rope and the entering in the register of the tribute. In Shoa, where land is dear, one *gāššā* may cost many dollars and the tribute may be a “gundo” of honey or a fine *shamma* or the “*ginda bal*,” or the land may have to support a deacon or a Sacristan. Or the owner may pay a “*buluko*” yearly—the *shamma* of seven cubits with thick warp and weft that costs from six to seven dollars. Such is called “spinner’s” land. One *gundo* of honey is equal to two *qunnās*, which would fill two washbasins and may be worth twelve dollars.

4. In a *gult* there will be a *Mislániei* of the Government as guardian, but the owner will have no *malkaññā* over him. When he dies, he may leave it to his son, for it is “*irist*” or heritable, and he may sell it in need, but it will always be called “*gult*” land, which originally belonged to owners now dispossessed or was abandoned or was uncultivated forest. Only the owner must provide for travellers the food that is called “*māstángido*,” when the Government orders, and from time to time will send a present to Addis Ababa.

5. If a new Government comes, he may not uproot a man from his *gult*, unless he is found in some sin against

the Government. In the Anuak country there is no gult, though the Governor may give a place to a trader—nor in Gurafarda nor Masango nor Gimmira nor Kaffa. Abba Jifár is the ruler of Jimma, and years ago Jân Hoi made agreement with him that no Abyssinian should be made an officer in his province and that there should be no Nagādrās to collect customs and that he alone should pay tribute. Thus there is no gult in Jimma. A gult may be only one gāššā or thousands of gāššās, which may not be crossed in a week's travelling, like the gult given to the late Nigús Walda Giyorgis from Konta as far as Nonno. For such he paid only fifty tusks a year or fifty ounces of gold. In a barren country an officer may make one payment only of some tusks and nothing yearly except to a Church, which he will serve always; for his service to the Government is in time of war and he provides a contingent in a campaign. People may settle on his land and from these he himself will receive the tribute. To such lands the thrower of the rope may never come.

6. The coming of the rope is for the setting up of the "siso"—the third part—by which a man will labour one day for the Government and two days for himself. But every one, whatever is his tenure, will pay the tenth of his crops to the Government. In many parts of Shoa, such as Manz, Marabeitei, Ensāro, Minjār, Bulgā, and Ankobar, there is no rope, for men hold the land as their fathers' left it and there is no "siso." Such a one is not a "siso ṭamáj" or "yoked" to the third, like the ordinary landowner. Nor is the man who holds by the "ginda bal," who, in time of war, must carry the poles of the tents of the Nigús or the curtains; in time of peace, he will grind five qunnās of flour twice yearly

for the Palace, or five qunnās monthly, and repair the thatch of the houses of the Government and the walls or fence. Or it may be “ya-čāñ<sup>1</sup> mareit”—loader’s land—for he has to keep and feed a mule of the Emperor’s and load and follow it in war. Or “ya-dastā mareit,” if he has to load the great red tent which the Chamberlain hurries in front for the Līgābā, who is his chief. So men, weary from the road, will see it far off and press on, crying, “Dastā has been pitched.” For it is the Addārāš or Entrance Hall, and the sign of the camp. Also, there is “ya-warāri<sup>2</sup> mareit” forager’s land—for in a war he must rise early and burn the houses of the enemy and capture their beasts; in peace he will split wood and work as a carpenter for the Government. Such land is at Ilma Amārā six days from Addis Ababa towards Wolo. Or it may be “ya-wobo mareit”—land of the centre of the army—like Yifrātā and Gišei. Gamo is the land held by the “Sanādīr yāž”<sup>3</sup>—the Snider holder—who camps to the right of the Nigūs. Such was the Fitaurāri Habta Giyorgis who had two thousand officers under him. From every thousand men a hundred will come monthly to Addis Ababa twice a year to guard the town. Each is called a “wur gabi,”<sup>4</sup> since he is there for a month. He who camps to the left of the Nigūs is the “Ya-Golau Gieitā,” who has under him forty-four land-holders and will provide six hundred riflemen—like the Dajjach Walda Mikāeil, the father of Ras Makwanen.

7. The word “botā” may mean the place of the office, for there is land set apart for the officers of a Governor. Therefore, when a new Governor arrives, a Fitaurāri will occupy the botā of a Fitaurāri and the Wambar that of the Wambar. If a European gives a present to an officer

<sup>1</sup> vb. 746.<sup>2</sup> vb. 516.<sup>3</sup> vb. 559.<sup>4</sup> vb. 613.

and settles in his botā, he may be ejected by the new-comer, nor will he be repaid the cost of his labour. So, too, soldiers may live in their botā and will pay no tribute. But in the quarter of the Nagādrās there will be many settlers who will live in his botā and pay him a dollar a year. Such a settler is called a "čīsaññā"<sup>1</sup> because of the smoke of his hut and, if a great guest arrives, the servants of the Nagādrās will order them all to send each twenty pieces of bread and a jar of beer. So, too, a "čīsaññā" may settle in the botā of an officer and pay him hire. This dollar that is given yearly to the Nagādrās is named the qolo of the Fast (though it is not roasted grain, like that given to a Confessor), and it is paid in September at the Feast of St. John. Thus the botā is not a gult nor is it heritable, but goes with the office.

8. A Governor may buy a piece of heritable land from its owner in front of the Qoro and witnesses by the 80 bond. Then the countryside will be ordered to clear and plough the ground, and after the harvest the grain will be stored near the hut of the Mislāniei. At certain times the Governor will go out with his officers and soldiers to watch the cultivation and aid the work, and the Governor will spend the day holding a Chilot under a tree. Such a piece of land is called a "hudād" because all will help in the toil. But if the Governor is dismissed, the army will no longer aid, and he or his heirs must cultivate it as best they can.

<sup>1</sup> vb. 754.



## CHAPTER XXI

### CONTRIBUTIONS

1. There is no shame in the word "gabbār"<sup>1</sup>—one who pays gibir—for even Menilik himself paid taxes to the Government on his land. Thus any high officer will be a "gabbār." When the Amāras made the Gallas serfs in war, they took the cultivated land and caused the Gallas to pay tribute—such as the grinding of flour and the supplying of honey and bulls—thus "straightening out" the country. The forest was in part divided up among the old soldiers called the "Gondari," and they, after clearing it with sword and knife, paid the asrāt only—the tenth part of their crops. Afterwards the thrower of the rope came and determined the inheritance of each.

2. Each officer received for his support a number of Galla gabbārs, according to his rank, and became a malkaññā. The toil of such gabbārs may be great, and if they are oppressed by the malkaññā, a man may depart to live in another district as a čisaññā or squatter. There his work is by prayer rather than by force, nor can the owner imprison him as a gabbār, but he will aid in the building, weeding, and cultivation, and after a few years land will be given to him as an inheritance and he will again become a gabbār.

3. In the Galla country a gabbār may escape by night with his family and "dry spear" and "pass like a dream" into another province. If he is taken on the road before he passes the boundary, he will be compelled, before the

<sup>1</sup> vb. 614

Qoro, to call a guarantor, lest he escape again. But if he has crossed, the judge will refuse to give his hand, unless he has money of his former master or was feeding his animals at home and took them.

4. Before a Governor divided the Galla gabbārs among his officers, he called the Qoros and asked how much each could pay, and their names were written in the register together with the number of bushels of grain which they could give. These officers were the heads of a "čifrā" or host, and paid no gibir themselves since their service is war; save only, when the Governor orders, they will go with their soldiers to weed and reap the Government domain, and will send their gabbārs to mend his fences or houses. The land of an officer may be increased and his name may be changed by promotion at the New Year or Feast of the Cross. Also at the Feast of the Cross or Christmas or Easter or the New Year his gabbārs, taking counsel together, will give their malkaññā a sheep or a bull, and once a year after the harvest will pay the amount written in the register. Also, by turns, they will break his wood, mend his house, carry his food, and load his animals. A big gabbār will give four dollars and three dāullās<sup>1</sup> of grain yearly. If he is injured unjustly, he will complain to the Qoro, who will call the malkaññā, or, if the Qoro will not listen, he can cry out to the Endarāsei or to the Governor himself. But in Shoa, where land is dear, a gabbār will not run away, for his malkaññā would be well content.

5. If the Galla gabbār has a hard master, his labour may be heavy if he has to tend mules and bulls and gelded rams and goats; also there is the work in the domain of the Governor. Or his master may send him to a distant

<sup>1</sup> Cf. note to p. 118.

market to buy honey and load it on his mule. Of the grain and flour for feasts one gabbār will carry them to the Palace and another will load them on a donkey. If the steward receives and measures slowly, they may wait many days, if the gabbārs arrive in a crowd. In time of war a malkaññā will say to his gabbārs, " Rise up and take counsel ! Some of you must carry my food and go up to Addis Ababa." So two or three of them will go and the others will buy a mule for their master's food. Yet if one dies in war, his wife and children will inherit.

6. When the grain has been threshed and cleaned, the guardian of the asrāt will come with the Chiqā Shūm on the fixed day to sweep the grain into the measure—one for the Government and nine for the cultivator. The grain of the Government will be carried by the gabbār to the houses of the Chiqā Shūm—each kind to be placed in its separate store. This is afterwards handed out by measure to the soldiers or to the kitchen of the Palace or to any guest or pensioner of the Government. But, if a traveller arrives with a pass from the Government ordering the " šālaqā " or local chief to provide him with mastāngido and gáfarā—food and forage—and to pass him on to the next chief, the food and forage will be provided by the people. For the Mislāneie will command the Qoro and the Qoro will tell the Chiqā Shūm to collect the food at a certain place near the camp. So each gabbār will bring a little and even a squatter will give wood and grass.

7. A Galla gabbār, besides the payment of a tenth of his crops, will be yoked to the siso,<sup>1</sup> working two days for himself and one day for the Government, and the Gallas perform the siso according to their number. But other

<sup>1</sup> Cf p 25

gabbārs will send only one worker to the sīso, even if they possess many gāššās. In Shoa the fine for absence is two dollars or eight bars of salt, and is called the "addāfān." Also, in Shoa, where the rope has been thrown, a gabbār may work three days for himself and one day for the malkaññā or Nigūs: but on Sundays or on days of festival he will rest. Nor will such a gabbār perform the sīso, if he pays a yearly tribute for his land in grain and dollars. A Galla gabbār will have to carry to the town at Easter and Christmas seven qunnās of grain, which is half a donkey's load, or he will have to grind monthly five qunnās of flour for the Government. This is coarse flour for the making of beer, and is quickly ground, as the grain is first roasted.

8. The owner of broad lands may enclose a piece of grass, which he will call his kilkil or preservē. If the beasts of a muleteer enter and graze, the latter may try to drive them out, but the owner will cry, "By the Nigūs! By the Bed! Let not thy foot move nor bend from where it is!" So, if he knows the law, he will stand still and pay the fine; but, if he advances, he may be accused as a recusant.

9. When a man becomes the gabbār of a rich land-owner as his ploughman, the master may sow apart for him a piece of land as his private possession. Also, a father may give a gulimmā to his son as his peculium.

10. If a man finds a piece of waste land or forest, he may cut down the trees and make a lane, so that others may see it. If another man begins to work on it, the first will accuse him, saying, "That my hand before thy hand, my leg before thy leg, my axe before thy axe—that I first made the 'falam'<sup>1</sup> I will give honey."

<sup>1</sup> vb. 767.

So, too, a man may make three or four furrows with a plough and leave the land "marked."

11. The dikkā is the boundary mark both of a qalād and of a town, for a judge has trodden the spot and set up a piece of wood or a stone with the Chiqā Shūm and witnesses. Also, a small boy may have gone with them, so that, when he grows up, he may know the mark. If a man changes a land mark, he is called the "pusher" of the boundary, and will be despised like a thief.

12. Every seven or ten years they may order a tax, saying, "Produce each a dollar by the tail!" Or the tax may be by the hearth where lie the three stones of the fire. So the Mislāniei with the Chiqā Shūm will count the animals and take one bull from every ten for slaughtering by the Government on a day of Festival or on a Suḡday when there is a public feast. From three cows a man may pay a dollar and for a goat or a sheep one tamun; or for every five sheep or goats or three pack mules or three pack horses or donkeys he will pay a dollar. But calves will not be reckoned, nor riding mules. If the "milmil" is made, all the horses and mules that are long and clean will be assembled and measured and saddled by the Master of the Horse. If any are fitting a small sum will be given to the owner, who will keep them apart and feed them for the Government in case of need; also pack mules may be taken by the milmil in time of war, and even men themselves, if they are needed by the Government.

13. Besides those who hold land for service in war there are those who give only the tenth of their crops and render service to the Government by their skill. For a landholder may be a carpenter, who will work one or

two months in the Palace and afterwards another will take his place. So, too, one may be a fashioner of horn cups, or a weaver of shammas, or a silversmith, or mason, or beater of iron, or a sewer and embroiderer of the harness and coverings of a mule's saddle, whether the stitch is uniform or varied or coarse or fine. Or he may sew up the gowns and drawers of women and men, or, being given the hide of a buffalo, will work it up into shields. Or from leather he will make sheaths for swords covered with Morocco leather. Some will be tanners, whom the Qoro on days of festival will order to come and carry away the hides of slaughtered bulls and to return them dressed. Or from the thick hides another will cut thongs for pack mules, after softening the leather. All this work will be handed over to the Bájirond, who will place it in the store as presents for the officers of the Government.

## CHAPTER XXX

### INHERITANCE

1. When the feast of commemoration is held on the fortieth day, the testament<sup>1</sup> is read aloud by the Confessor. If the declaration of the testator is made before his Confessor, there must be two witnesses ; if a priest is absent, there will be three witnesses. When he makes the declaration, the Confessor will hold his right thumb. But if he desires after his death to give his land to a stranger out of his family, he must go with the stranger to the judge and stand upright—not as one stricken with illness, for the judge will not come to his sickbed. So he will cry to the judge, “ I have begotten this man and given him my land. Let Menilik die ! ” and will pay two dollars, just as in a suit for honey. But he may not on his bed make such a declaration, nor will it stand firm for the stranger. Hence the saying, “ If thou dost declare when the pangs of death seize thee—with God as Judge and the bed as fellow-prisoner—it may not be.” For the Government would be dazed and fooled.

2. A man may leave his house and goods to his kin as far as the fourth “house” or generation, but not to the fifth generation, nor may his godson be counted nor an adopted child nor a step child. If he leaves no kin to produce the feast of commemoration, the Government will give half to his godchild or to his partners in the private Communion. But a person related by marriage

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 17, 52

alone is reckoned as a stranger. If he dies without a declaration, his kin will take the land up to the seventh generation, even if one is a woman.

3. If the husband and wife bought the land in partnership, she will take the half of the price. If there was no will and the land was his, she is counted as a stranger, so that the Government will inherit if there are no kin. But she will receive half the price of the movable property, waiting to divide the crops of that season, though the trees will not be hers. Also the half of the animals and slaves will be hers, together with half the value of the house. For there is a saying of husband and wife, "With us there is equality. When we speak, it is half and half." But after the maize is cut, the stalk remains outside.

4. If the heir is a babe, the mother will stay to rear it, unless the brother was ordered by the will to take the child. If she is only an adopted mother, the brother will rear it. If there are several sons, the eldest will inherit. If a son is not legitimate, he will inherit, provided that the father did not deny him ; if he is born after the death of the testator, the kin will examine his face and make oath. For a man's son, whether his mother is a slave or a concubine or a "Communion wife" or an "80 bond" wife, will share in the inheritance.





## GLOSSARY OF AMHARIC WORDS

*Where a word is explained in the Book, the page  
only may be given.*

### A

ábabā . . . .	flower, cf. Addis Ábabā=New Flower
Abba Dulla . . . .	186
— Sangā . . . .	186
Abbātāchin . . . .	"Our Father," <i>i.e.</i> the Metropolitan
Abbo . . . .	the Saint Gabr Manfas Qiddūs= "Slave of the Holy Ghost"
Abbūn(a) . . . .	cf. Abbātāchin
Abdullah Kāni . . . .	trade name of a chintz
abeitotā . . . .	the appeal of suppliants, who cry out "abéit!"
Abu Takla	
Hāimanot . . . .	the Saint, Takla Hāimānot= "Plant of Religion"
āda ábabā . . . .	90
(ya) Ádarā abbāt . . . .	"deposit" father, <i>i.e.</i> guardian
addāfāñ . . . .	a fine, 118, 195
addārāš . . . .	entrance hall; verb 607
Āfa Mammir . . . .	representative of the Metropolitan, 67, 109
Āfa Nigús . . . .	"mouth of the Emperor," Lord Chief Justice.
afarsātā . . . .	public inquisition, 153
agbā . . . .	appeal to the Wambar, lit. "enter (thy stake)!"
Aggāfāri . . . .	Chamberlain
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akfāi . . . . .	total abstainer in fasts, 72
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aklil . . . . .	marriage crown, 36, 38, 112
alād . . . . .	half a dollar
alāmā . . . . .	lit. a mark, flag, 91
Álaqā . . . . .	Head of a Church
alei . . . . .	" it is a lie ! " 143
algā . . . . .	bedstead, hence the Bed of State
Amārā . . . . .	an Abyssinian
amat tazkār . . . . .	year commemoration, 132
Amda Warq . . . . .	" Pillar of Gold " in a church, usually of wood and set in the wall, 96, cf. Qíniei Maḥleit
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annabábiro . . . . .	a special bread, 131
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aqqābīt . . . . .	one (feminine) who grinds the grain for the Communion Bread, 66
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Azzāž . . . . .	Steward, lit. " one who orders "

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bāhtāwi . . . . .	hermit
Bájirond . . . . .	Treasurer

bāla sām̄mint . . .	"lord of the week," 124
Baldárabā . . .	protector of strangers, 147
Baldarās . . .	Master of the Horse
baqeilā . . .	broad bean, 46
barnós . . .	black poncho of wool
bāsōbīlā . . .	a condiment, 70
Beitaliheim . . .	"House of Bread," church kitchen, 81, 96
Beizāeit . . .	"Protectress," epithet of the Vir- gin Mary, 103
botā . . .	place, residence, 190
Brutāwīt . . .	98
budā . . .	one with the evil eye, 20
buhaqā . . .	jar, 51
Buhei . . .	The Transfiguration, 87
buluko . . .	a thick toga, 16, 188
burākei . . .	portion of Communion bread re- served as a "blessing," 124, 127, 131

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čilot . . .	the court presided over by the Governor and Wambars, 145
čubbo . . .	torch, 88, 90

## Č

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čibṭ . . .	legal interrogation, 143
čifrā . . .	band of soldiers, host, 120, 193
čiqā šūm . . .	"soil officer," district chief who represents the Government
čirā . . .	tail
čīsaññā . . .	"one whose hut smokes," squatter and not a serf, 191-2

## D

dābbalo . . .	sheepskin, 163
dahir . . .	99, 109

Dabra — . . .	consecrated territory, site of a church or monastery, e.g. Dabra Libānos, Dabra Tabór. Cf. dabir
dábtarā . . .	a "scribe," cf. Ecclesiastics
dāfan . . .	a fine, 109
dāgussā . . .	a grain used especially for beer, 131
Dajja Salām . .	"Door of Salutation" at the entrance to the church, 5, 95
Dajjāč, Dajjāz . .	Shortened forms of Dajjāzmāč
Dajjāzmāč . . .	"one who in war camps near the door (dajj) of the Emperor's tent," cf. Qaññāzmāč, Gerāzmāč. Hence often a Governor of high rank.
dālgā . . .	lit. yoke, 122
Damarā . . .	collection of wands heaped together at the Festival of the Cross, 90
dangaṭūr . . .	bride's attendant, 29
dāullā . . .	measure of grain=20 qunnā, 118, 193
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Egziavheir . . .	God, contracted to
Egzio . . .	especially as cry of suppliants
Ékalei . . .	So-and-so ; feminine Ékalīt
Endarāsei . . .	"as my head," i.e. representative, especially of a Sub-Governor

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enkokko . . . .	a plant, 8
Enqwutātāš . . . .	a grass. New Year's present, 88

## F

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Fidala Hawāria . . . .	"Syllabary of the Apostles"—a book, 105
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Filsatā . . . .	The Assumption of the Virgin Mary
fim ĉāri . . . .	"raker of embers," 107
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fird . . . .	verdict
firda gamdāi } . . . .	"cleaver of a verdict," 139
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Fitāurāri . . . .	"leader of the advance guard," a military title
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gahāḍ . . . .	cf. gād
Gahānnab . . . .	Gehenna (Gahānnam)
gal . . . .	pot of clay, 69
gān . . . .	jar, 127
ganfo . . . .	porridge, 90
garad . . . .	servant girl

gāššā . . . .	(1) shield ; (2) measure of land, 118, 187
gaṭar . . . .	church handed over to a patron, 99, 109
gāṭsa bārakat . . .	" face blessing," 112
geišo . . . .	leaves of a plant used for fermenting honey
Gerāzmāč . . . .	" camper on the left," a junior title, cf. Dajjāzmāč
Gibbi . . . .	messuage, especially of a Governor's palace, 147
gibir . . . .	public service, especially of a feast due to soldiers and given regularly, 93, 192
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hibista Hannā . . .	Communion Bread, lit. " Bread of Joy " ?
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hudād . . .	labour, especially of a governor's land tilled by his army, 77, 191
Hudādei . . .	Lent, 39, 68

## I

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imnat . . .	(1) acknowledgment, averment, 139; (2) embers of censer, 100
irist . . .	heritable land, inheritance
irm . . .	anything of ill omen or prohibited, especially of ill news to be averted by spittle, 54, 61, 69, 135
irsa-o . . .	"Your Excellency"
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iṭā . . .	lots, 123

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## K

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kāhin . . .	an ecclesiastic; plural kāhināt
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kurmán . . . .	quarter part of bread, 128
kutā . . . .	a fine toga or šammā with embroidery on edges
kwotei . . . .	hoof tax on animals, 185

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nafs . . . .	soul
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Nagādrās . . . .	"Head of Trade," the Head of Customs
Nágara Faji . . .	"finisher of affairs," agent, 152
nagārit . . . .	big drum, 101
Nánawei . . . .	Nineveh, 69
nātalā . . . .	single of the toga or <i>šāmmā</i> , 46, 63
nei ! . . . .	come ! (feminine)
nifqu . . . .	assistant priest or deacon, 107
nifro . . . .	porridge, 86
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Nigist . . . .	Empress
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Qiddist . . . . .	the part of the church outside the Maqdas=the Nave
qiddūs . . . . .	holy
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qinie Maḥleit . . . .	the Choir, separated from the Qiddist by the wall in which are the Amda Warq. One passes between and under the Amda Warq
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qworābi . . . . .	one who is a communicant, 36, 39
Qwuxbān . . . . .	The Holy Communion, 35, 38

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- Rās . . . . . "head," a high rank  
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## S

- Sa'ātāt . . . . . "Hours" (canonical), *Horologium*,  
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 salām . . . . . salutation, cf. Dajja Salām, 75  
 samānyā . . . . . 80, hence the "80 bond" or  
 solemn legal stipulation. An 80  
 wife is one married by this  
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 oath "Let Menilik die!"  
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 sūf . . . . . a plant, 60

## SH

- šālaqā . . . . . commander, 194  
 šambal . . . . . commander, 120

šammā . . . .	the cotton toga or outer shawl-like covering worn by all Abyssinians. It may be (1) an ordinary šammā; (2) náṭalā, a thin single one; (3) a buluko, a thick coarse one; (4) a kutā, of fine cotton with embroidery on edges; (5) a jāno, with a broad red stripe
šūm širat . . . .	"officer dismissal," the levée at which new appointments are made, 92
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